

[illegible]



Class _____

Book _____

Copyright N^o _____

COPYRIGHT DEPOSIT.

In This Our World

AND

Other Poems

BY

CHARLOTTE PERKINS STETSON

SAN FRANCISCO

JAMES H. BARRY AND JOHN H. MARBLE, PUBLISHERS

1895



IN THIS OUR WORLD

AND OTHER POEMS

By CHARLOTTE PERKINS STETSON

Would ye but understand!
Joy is on every hand!
Ye shut your eyes and call it night,
Ye grope and fall in seas of light—
Would ye but understand!

SAN FRANCISCO
JAMES H. BARRY AND JOHN H. MARBLE, PUBLISHERS

1895

COPYRIGHT, 1893, 1895,
BY CHARLOTTE PERKINS STETSON.
ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.

PRESS OF JAMES H. BARRY, 429 MONTGOMERY STREET, S. F.

CONTENTS.

THE WORLD.

The Rock and the Sea,	1
Songs,	5
The Cup,	6
On the Pawtuxet,	7
Pioneers,	8
Heaven,	9
Thanksgiving Hymn,	10
Christmas Carol,	11
The Changeless Year,	13
Where Memory Sleeps,	14
A Prayer,	14
The Ship,	15
A Moonrise,	15
Nature's Answer,	16
Among the Gods,	18
What Then?	20
Why Not?	21
A Nevada Desert,	22
The Heart of the Water,	22
The Modern Skeleton,	23
The Lion Path,	24
Baby Love,	25
Too Much,	26
The Prophets,	26
Reinforcements,	27

THE WORLD (Continued).

For Us,	28
Desire,	29
In Duty Bound,	30
The Lesson of Death,	31

WOMAN.

She Walketh Veiled and Sleeping,	35
Girls of To-day,	36
Women of To-day,	38
To Mothers,	39
"We, as Women,"	42
Six Hours a Day,	44
Reassurance,	45
Ballade of ye Gentil Mayde,	46
Feminine Vanity,	48
Females,	50
Unsexed,	52
The Holy Stove,	54
A Brood Mare,	56
False Play,	59
To the Young Wife,	60
An Old Proverb,	62
The Child Speaks,	63
Mother to Child,	65
To Man,	68
She Who is to Come,	71

OUR HUMAN KIND.

Similar Cases,	72
A Conservative,	76
The Survival of the Fittest,	78
An Obstacle,	80
What's That?	82
Christian Virtues,	84
Wedded Bliss,	87
The Sweet Uses of Adversity,	88
A Hope,	89
The Amœboid Cell,	91
The Cart Before the Horse,	94

OUR HUMAN KIND (Continued).

"The Poor Ye have Always with You,"	95
Mr. Rockefeller's Prayer,	96
The Old Time Wail,	98
Poor Human Nature,	100
Charity,	101
Division of Property,	102
The Dead Level,	103
The Looker On,	104
Free Land is Not Enough,	106
Waste,	107
Nationalism,	108

OTHER POEMS.

Ballad of the Summer Sun,	113
Wings,	116
Compromise,	117
As Flew the Cross,	118
Services,	119
Seeking,	121
Finding,	122
New Duty,	123
Ruined,	124
Motherhood,	126
The Lost Game,	130
Who is to Blame?	132
Out of Place,	135
Out of the Gate,	136
Limits,	138
An Economist,	139
The Pig and the Pearl,	140
A Misfit,	142
The Keeper of the Light,	143
It is Good to be Alive,	144
Christmas Hymn,	145
Thanksgiving,	146
Morning,	147
The Wolf at the Door,	148
The Living God,	150

OTHER POEMS (Continued).

My Cyclamen, 152

Birth, 153

SONGS OF SAN FRANCISCO (From *The Impress*).

The Hills, 155

City's Beauty, 156

"An Unusual Rain," 157

From Russian Hill, 159

Powell Street, 160

THE SATIRIST (From *The Impress*).

A New Year's Reminder, 163

Little Cell, 164

The Modest Maid, 165

Technique, 166

The Mother's Charge, 167

A New Creation, 169

Connoisseurs, 170

A Type, 171

Unmentionable, 172

New Year's Day, 173

News, 174

The Pastellette, 175

Work and Wages, 176

Step Faster, Please, 177

Our San Francisco Climate, 178

Christmas Time, 179

In Re "Andromaniacs," 181

The San Francisco Hen, 182

"En Banc," 183

IN THIS OUR WORLD.



Charlotte Perkins Stetson

THE WORLD.

THE ROCK AND THE SEA.

THE ROCK.

I am the Rock, presumptuous Sea!
I am set to encounter thee.
Angry and loud, or gentle and still,
I am set here to limit thy power, and I will—
I am the Rock!

I am the Rock. From age to age
I scorn thy fury and dare thy rage.
Scarred by frost and worn by time,
Brown with weed and green with slime,
Thou may'st drench and defile me and spit
in my face,
But while I am here thou keep'st thy place!
I am the Rock!

I am the Rock, beguiling Sea!
I know thou art fair as fair can be,
With golden glitter and silver sheen
And bosom of blue and garments of green.

Thou may'st pat my cheek with baby hands,
And lap my feet in diamond sands,
And play before me as children play ;
But plead as thou wilt, I bar the way !
I am the Rock !

I am the Rock. Black midnight falls ;
The terrible breakers rise like walls ;
With curling lips and gleaming teeth
They plunge and tear at my bones beneath.
Year upon year they grind and beat
In storms of thunder and storms of sleet—
Grind and beat and wrestle and tear,
But the rock they beat on is always there !
I am the Rock !

THE SEA.

I am the Sea. I hold the land
As one holds an apple in his hand.
Hold it fast with sleepless eyes,
Watching the continents sink and rise.
Out of my bosom the mountains grow,
Back to its depths they crumble slow ;
The earth is a helpless child to me—
I am the Sea !

I am the Sea. When I draw back
Blossom and verdure follow my track,
And the land I leave grows proud and fair,
For the wonderful race of man is there ;

And the winds of heaven wail and cry
While the nations rise and reign and die—
Living and dying in folly and pain,
While the laws of the universe thunder in
vain.

What is the folly of man to me?

I am the Sea!

I am the Sea. The earth I sway;
Granite to me is potter's clay;
Under the touch of my careless waves
It rises in turrets and sinks in caves;
The iron cliffs that edge the land
I grind to pebbles and sift to sand,
And beach-grass bloweth and children play
In what were the rocks of yesterday;
It is but a moment of sport to me—

I am the Sea!

I am the Sea. In my bosom deep
Wealth and Wonder and Beauty sleep;
Wealth and Wonder and Beauty rise
In changing splendor of sunset skies
And comfort the earth with rains and snows
Till waves the harvest and laughs the rose.
Flower and forest and child of breath
With me have life—without me, death.
What if the ships go down in me—?

I am the Sea!

A COMMON INFERENCE.

A night : mysterious, tender, quiet, deep ;
Heavy with flowers ; full of life asleep ;
Thrilling with insect voices ; thick with stars ;
No cloud between the dewdrops and red Mars ;
The small earth whirling softly on her way,
The moonbeams and the waterfalls at play ;
A million million worlds that move in peace,
A million mighty laws that never cease ;
And one small ant-heap, hidden by small weeds,
Rich with eggs, slaves, and store of millet seeds.

They sleep beneath the sod
And trust in God.

A day : all glorious, royal, blazing bright ;
Heavy with flowers ; full of life and light ;
Great fields of corn and sunshine ; courteous trees ;
Snow-sainted mountains ; earth-embracing seas ;
Wide golden deserts ; slender silver streams ;
Clear rainbows where the tossing fountain gleams ;
And everywhere, in happiness and peace,
A million forms of life that never cease ;
And one small ant-heap, crushed by passing tread,
Hath scarce enough alive to mourn the dead !

They shriek beneath the sod,
"There is no God !"

SONGS.

I.

O world of green, all shining, shifting!
O world of blue, all living, lifting!
O world where glassy waters smoothly roll!
Fair earth, and heaven free,
Ye are but part of me—
Ye are my soul!

O woman nature, shining, shifting!
O woman creature, living, lifting!
Come soft and still to one who waits thee here!
Fair soul, both mine and free,
Ye who are part of me,
Appear! Appear!

II.

How could I choose but weep?
The poor bird lay asleep;
For lack of food, for lack of breath,
For lack of life he came to death—
How could I choose but weep?

How could I choose but smile?
There was no lack the while!
In bliss he did undo himself;
Where life was full he slew himself—
How could I choose but smile?

Would ye but understand !
Joy is on every hand !
Ye shut your eyes and call it night,
Ye grope and fall in seas of light—
Would ye but understand !

THE CUP.

And yet, saith he, ye need but sip—
And who would die without a taste ?
Just touch the goblet to the lip,
Then let the bright draught run to waste !
She set her lip to the beaker's brim—
'T was passing sweet ! 'T was passing mild !
She let her large eyes dwell on him,
And sipped again, and smiled.
So sweet ! So mild ! She scarce can tell
If she doth really drink or no ;
Till the light doth fade and the shadows swell,
And the goblet lieth low.
O cup of dreams ! O cup of doubt !
O cup of blinding joy and pain !
The taste that none would die without !
The draught that all the world must drain !

ON THE PAWTUXET.

Broad and blue is the river, all bright in the sun ;
The little waves sparkle, the little waves run ;
The birds carol high, and the winds whisper low ;
The boats beckon temptingly, row upon row ;
Her hand is in mine as I help her step in —
Please Heaven, this day I shall lose or shall win —
Broad and blue is the river.

Cool and gray is the river, the sun sinks apace,
And the rose-colored twilight glows soft in her face.
In the midst of the rose-color Venus doth shine,
And the blossoming wild grapes are sweeter than
wine.

Tall trees rise above us, four bridges are past,
And my stroke's running slow as the current
runs fast —
Cool and grey is the river.

Smooth and black is the river, no sound as we
float
Save the soft-lapping water in under the boat.
The white mists are rising, the moon's rising too,
And Venus, triumphant, rides high in the blue.
I hold the shawl round her, her hand is in mine,
And we drift under grape-blossoms sweeter than
wine —

Smooth and black is the river.

PIONEERS.

Long have we sung our noble pioneers,
Vanguard of progress, heralds of the time,
Guardians of industry and art sublime,
Leaders of man down all the brightening years!
To them the danger, to their wives the tears,
While we sit safely in the city's grime,
In old-world trammels of distress and crime,
Playing with words and thoughts, with doubts
and fears.

Children of axe and gun! Ye take to-day
The baby steps of man's first, feeblest age,
While we, thought-seekers of the printed page,
We lead the world down its untrodden way!
Ours the drear wastes and leagues of empty
waves,
The lonely deaths, the undiscovered graves.

HEAVEN.

Thou bright mirage, that o'er man's arduous way
Hast hung in the hot sky, with fountains stream-
ing,

Cool marble domes, and palm-fronds waving,
gleaming—

Vision of rest and peace to end the day!

Now he is weariest, alone, astray,

Spent with long labor, led by thy sweet seem-
ing—

Faint as the breath of Nature's lightest dreaming,
Thou waverest and vanishest away!

Can Nature dream? Is God's great sky deceiving?

Where joy like that the clouds above us show

Be sure the counterpart must lie below,

Sweeter than hope—more blessed than believing!

We lose the fair reflection of our home

Because so near its gates our feet have come!

THANKSGIVING HYMN.

FOR CALIFORNIA.

Our forefathers gave thanks to God,
In the land by the stormy sea,
For bread hard wrung from the iron sod
In cold and misery.
Though every day meant toil and strife,
In the land by the stormy sea,
They thanked their God for the gift of life —
How much the more should we!

Stern frost had they full many a day,
Strong ice on the stormy sea,
Long months of snow, gray clouds hung low,
And a cold wind endlessly;
Winter, and war with an alien race —
But they were alive and free!
And they thanked their God for his good grace —
How much the more should we!

For we have a land all sunny with gold —
A land by the summer sea —
Gold in the earth for our hands to hold,
Gold in blossom and tree;
Comfort, and plenty, and beauty, and peace,
From the mountains down to the sea —
They thanked their God for a year's increase —
How much the more should we!

CHRISTMAS CAROL.

FOR LOS ANGELES.

On the beautiful birthday of Jesus,
While the nations praising stand,
He goeth from city to city,
He walketh from land to land.

And the snow lies white and heavy,
And the ice lies wide and wan,
But the love of the blessed Christmas
Melts even the heart of man.

With love from the heart of Heaven,
In the power of His Holy Name,
To the City of the Queen of the Angels,
The tender Christ-child came.

The land blushed red with roses,
The land laughed glad with grain,
And the little hills smiled softly
In the freshness after rain.

Land of the fig and olive!
Land of the fruitful vine!
His heart grew soft within him,
As he thought of Palestine—

Of the brooks with the banks of lilies,
Of the little doves of clay,
And of how he sat with his mother
At the end of a summer's day,

His head on his mother's bosom,
His hand in his mother's hand,
Watching the golden sun go down
Across the shadowy land—

A moment's life with human kind—
A moment—nothing more ;
Eternity lies broad behind—
Eternity before.

High on the Hills of Heaven,
Majestic, undefiled,
Forever and ever he lives, a God ;
But once he lived, a child !

And the child-heart leaps within him,
And the child-eyes softer grow,
When the land lies bright and sunny,
Like the land of long ago ;

And the love of God is mingled
With the love of dear days gone,
When he comes to the city of his mother,
On the day her child was born !

THE CHANGELESS YEAR.

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA.

Doth Autumn remind thee of sadness?
And Winter of wasting and pain?
Midsummer, of joy that was madness?
Spring, of hope that was vain?

Do the Seasons fly fast at thy laughter?
Do the Seasons lag slow if thou weep,
Till thou long'st for the land lying after
The River of Sleep?

Come here, where the West lieth golden
In the light of an infinite sun,
Where Summer doth Winter embolden
Till they reign here as one!

Here the Seasons tread soft and steal slowly;
A moment of question and doubt—
Is it Winter? Come faster!—come wholly!—
And Spring rusheth out!

We forget there are tempests and changes;
We forget there are days that are drear;
In a dream of delight, the soul ranges
Through the measureless year.

Still the land is with blossoms enfolden,
Still the sky burneth blue in its deeps,
Time noddeth, 'mid poppies all golden,
And memory sleeps.

WHERE MEMORY SLEEPS.

RONDEAU.

Where memory sleeps the soul doth rise,
Free of that past where sorrow lies,
And storeth against future ills
The courage of the constant hills,
The comfort of the quiet skies.

Fair is this land to tired eyes,
Where summer sunlight never dies,
And summer's peace the spirit fills,
Where memory sleeps.

Safe from the season's changing cries
And chill of yearly sacrifice,
Great roses crowd the window sills—
Calm roses that no winter kills.
The peaceful heart all pain denies,
Where memory sleeps.

A PRAYER.

O God! I cannot ask thee to forgive—
I have done wrong!
Thy law is just—Thy law must live—
Whoso doth wrong must suffer pain!
But help me to do right again—
Again be strong!

THE SHIP.

The sunlight is mine! And the sea!
And the four wild winds that blow!
The winds of heaven that whistle free —
They are but slaves to carry me
Wherever I choose to go!

Fire for a power inside!
Air for a pathway free!
I traverse the earth in conquest wide;
The sea is my servant! The sea is my bride!
And the elements wait on me!

* * * * *

In dull green light, down-filtered sick and slow
Through miles of heavy water overhead,
With miles of heavy water yet below,
A ship lies, dead.
Shapeless and broken, swayed from side to side,
The helpless driftwood of an unknown tide.

A MOONRISE.

The heavy mountains, lying huge and dim,
With uncouth outline breaking heaven's brim —
And while I watched and waited, o'er them soon,
Cloudy, enormous, spectral, rose the moon.

NATURE'S ANSWER.

A man would build a house, and found a place
As fair as any on the earth's fair face :

Soft hills, dark woods, smooth meadows richly
green,

And cool tree-shaded lakes the hills between.

He built his house within this pleasant land,
A stately white-porched house, long years to stand ;

But, rising from his paradise so fair,
Came fever in the night and killed him there.

"O lovely land !" he cried, "how could I know
That death was lurking under this fair show ?"

And answered Nature, merciful, and stern,
"I teach by killing ; let the others learn !"

II.

A man would do great work, good work and true ;
He gave all things he had, all things he knew ;

He worked for all the world ; his one desire
To make the people happier, better, higher ;

Used his best wisdom, used his utmost strength ;
And, dying in the struggle, found at length,

The giant evils he had fought the same,
And that the world he loved scarce knew his name.

“Has all my work been wrong? I meant so well!
I loved so much!” he cried, “How could I tell?”

And answered Nature, merciful, and stern,
“I teach by killing; let the others learn.”

III.

A maid was asked in marriage. Wise as fair,
She gave her answer with deep thought and prayer,

Expecting, in the holy name of wife,
Great work, great pain, and greater joy, in life.

She found such work as brainless slaves might do,
By day and night, long labor, never through;

Such pain—no language can her pain reveal;
It had no limit but her power to feel;

Such joy—life left in her sad soul's employ
Neither the hope nor memory of joy.

Helpless, she died, with one despairing cry,
“I thought it good; how could I tell the lie?”

And answered Nature, merciful and stern,
“I teach by killing; let the others learn.”

AMONG THE GODS.

How close the air of valleys, and how close
The teeming little life that harbors there !
For me, I will climb mountains. Up and up,
Higher and higher, till I pant for breath
In that thin clearness. Still ? There is no sound
Nor memory of sound upon these heights.
Ah ! the great sunlight ! The caressing sky
The beauty, and the stillness, and the peace !
I see my pathway clear for miles below ;
See where I fell, and set the friendly sign
To warn some other of the danger there.
The green small world is wide below me spread.
The great small world ! Some things look large
and fair
Which, in their midst, I could not even see ;
And some look small which used to terrify.
Blessed these heights of freedom, wisdom, rest !
I will go higher yet.

A sea of cloud
Rolls soundless waves between me and the world.
This is the zone of everlasting snows,
And the sweet silence of the hills below
Is song and laughter to the silence here.
Great fields, huge peaks, long awful slopes of snow.
Alone, triumphant, man above the world,
I stand among these white eternities.

Sheer at my feet
Sink the unsounded, cloud-encumbered gulfs ;
And shifting mists now veil and now reveal
The unknown fastnesses above me yet.
I am alone—above all life—sole king
Of these white wastes. How pitiful and small
Becomes the outgrown world ! I reign supreme,
And in this utter stillness and wide peace
Look calmly down upon the universe.

Surely that crest has changed ! That pile of cloud
That covers half the sky, waves like a robe !

That large and gentle wind
Is like the passing of a presence here !
See how yon massive mist-enshrouded peak
Is like the shape of an unmeasured foot —
The figure with the stars !
Ah ! what is this ! It moves, lifts, bends, is gone !

With what a shocking sense of littleness—
A reeling universe that changes place,
And falls to new relation over me—
I feel the unseen presence of the gods !

WHAT THEN ?

Suppose you write your heart out till the world
Sobs with one voice—what then ?

Small agonies that round your heart-strings curled
Strung out for choice, that men

May pick a phrase, each for his own pet pain,
And thank the voice so come,
They being dumb. What then ?

You have no sympathy ? O endless claim !
No one that cares ? What then ?

Suppose you had—the whole world knew your
name

And your affairs, and men
Ached with your headache, dreamed your dreadful
dreams,

And, with your heart-break due,
Their hearts broke too. What then ?

You think that people do not understand ?

You suffer ? Die ? What then ?

Unhappy child, look here, on either hand,
Look low or high—all men

Suffer and die, and keep it to themselves !

They die—they suffer sore—

You suffer more ? What then ?

WHY NOT?

Why not look forward far as Plato looked
And see the beauty of our coming life,
As he saw that which might be ours to-day?
If his soul, then, could rise so far beyond
The brutal average of that old time,
When icy peaks of art stood sheer and high
In fat black valleys where the helot toiled —
If he, from that, could see so far ahead,
Could forecast days when Love and Justice both
Should watch the cradle of a healthy child,
And Wisdom walk with Beauty and pure Joy
In all the common ways of daily life —
Then may not we, from great heights hardly won,
Bright hills of liberty, broad plains of peace,
And flower-sweet valleys of warm human love,
Still broken by the chasms of despair
Where Poverty and Ignorance and Sin
Pollute the air of all — why not, from this,
Look on as Plato looked, and see the day
When his Republic and our Heaven, joined,
Shall make life what God meant it?

Ay, we do!

A NEVADA DESERT.

An aching, blinding, barren, endless plain,
Corpse-colored with white mould of alkali,
Hairy with sage-brush, slimy after rain,
Burnt with the sky's hot scorn, and still again
Sullenly burning back against the sky.

Dull green, dull brown, dull purple, and dull grey,
The hard earth white with ages of despair,
Slow-crawling, turbid streams where dead reeds sway,
Low wall of somber mountains far away,
And sickly steam of geysers on the air.

THE HEART OF THE WATER.

O the ache in the heart of the water that lies
Underground in the desert, unopened, unknown —
While the seeds lie unbroken, the blossoms unblown,
And the traveller wanders — the traveller dies !

O the joy in the heart of the water that flows
From the well in the desert — a desert no more —
Bird-music and blossoms and harvest in store,
And the white shrine that showeth the traveller
knows !

THE MODERN SKELETON.

As kings of old in riotous royal feasts,
Among the piled up roses and the wine,
Amidst the music and the dancing girls,
The pearls and gold and barbarous luxury,
Used to show also a white skeleton—
To make life meeker in the sight of death,
To make joy sweeter by the thought thereof—

So our new kings in their high banqueting,
With the electric lustre unforeseen,
And unimagined costliness of flowers;
Rich wines of price and food as rare as gems,
And all the wondrous waste of artifice;
Midst high-bred elegance and jeweled ease
And beauty of rich raiment, they should set,
High before all, a sickly pauper child,
To keep the rich in mind of poverty—
The sure concomitant of their estate.

THE LION PATH.

I dare not!—

Look! the road is very dark—
The trees stir softly and the bushes shake,
The long grass rustles, and the darkness moves
Here! there! beyond—!
There's something crept across the road just now!
And you would have me go—?
Go *there*, through that live darkness, hideous
With stir of crouching forms that wait to kill?
Ah, *look*! See there! and there! and there again!
Great yellow glassy eyes, close to the ground!
Look! Now the clouds are lighter I can see
The long slow lashing of the sinewy tails,
And the set quiver of strong jaws that wait—!
Go there? Not I! Who dares to go who sees
So perfectly the lions in the path?

Comes one who dares.

Afraid at first, yet bound
On such high errand as no fear could stay.
Forth goes he, with lions in his path.
And then—?

He dared a death of agony—
Outnumbered battle with the king of beasts—
Long struggle in the horror of the night—
Dared, and went forth to meet—O ye who fear!

Finding an empty road, and nothing there—
A wide, bare, common road, with homely fields,
And fences, and the dusty roadside trees—
Some spitting kittens, maybe, in the grass.

BABY LOVE.

Baby Love came prancing by,
Cap on head and sword on thigh,
Horse to ride and drum to beat—
All the world beneath his feet.

Mother Life was sitting there,
Hard at work and full of care,
Set of mouth and sad of eye—
Baby Love came prancing by.

Baby Love was very proud,
Very lively, very loud—
Mother Life arose in wrath,
Set an arm across his path.

Baby Love wept loud and long,
But his mother's arm was strong.
Mother had to work, she said.
Baby Love was put to bed.

TOO MUCH.

There are who die without love, never seeing
The clear eyes shining, the bright wings fleeing.
Lonely they die, and ahungered, in bitterness
 knowing
They have not had their share of the good there
 was going.

There are who have and lose love, these most
 blessed,
In joy unstained which they have once possessed,
Lost while still dear, still sweet, still met by glad
 affection—
An endless happiness in recollection.

And some have Love's full cup as he doth give it—
Have it, and drink of it, and ah,—outlive it!
Full fed by Love's delights, o'erwearied, sated—
They die, not hungry—only suffocated.

THE PROPHETS.

Time was we stoned the Prophets. Age on age,
When men were strong to save, the world hath
 slain them.

People are wiser now ; they waste no rage—
 The Prophets entertain them !

REINFORCEMENTS.

Yea, we despair. Because the night is long,
And all arms weary with the endless fight
With blind, black forces of insulted law
Which we continually disobey,
And know not how to honor if we would.
How can we fight when every effort fails,
And the vast hydra looms before us still
Headed as thickly as at dawn of day,
Fierce as when evening fell on us at war.
We are aweary, and no help appears;
No light, no knowledge, no sure way to kill
Our ancient enemy. Let us give o'er!
We do but fight with fate! Lay down your arms!
Retreat! Surrender! Better live as slaves
Than fight forever on a losing field!

Hold, ye faint-hearted! Ye are not alone!
Into your worn-out ranks of weary men
Come mighty reinforcements, even now!
Look where the dawn is kindling in the east,
Lit with the glory of the better day—
A countless host, an endless host, all fresh,
With unstained banners and unsullied shields,
With shining swords that point to victory,
And great, young hearts that know not how to
fear—
The Children come to save the weary world!

FOR US.

If we have not learned that God's in man,
And man in God again —
That to love thy God is to love thy brother,
And to serve the Lord is to serve each other —
Then Christ was born in vain !

If we have not learned that one man's life
In all men lives again —
That each man's battle, fought alone,
Is won or lost for every one —
Then Christ hath lived in vain !

If we have not learned that death's no break
In life's unceasing chain —
That the work in one life well begun
In others is finished, by others is done —
Then Christ hath died in vain !

If we have not learned of immortal life,
And a future free from pain —
The kingdom of God in the heart of man,
And the living world on Heaven's plan —
Then Christ arose in vain !

DESIRE.

Lo, I desire! Sum of the ages' growth—
Fruit of evolving eras—king of life—
I, holding in myself the outgrown past
In all its ever-rising forms—desire.
With the first grass-blade, I desire the sun;
With every bird that breathes, I love the air;
With fishes, joy in water; with my horse,
Exult in motion; with all living flesh,
Long for sweet food and warmth and mate and
 young;
With the whole rising tide of that which is,
Thirst for advancement—crave and yearn for it!
Yea, I desire! Then the compelling will
Urges to action to attain desire.
What action? Which desire? Am I a plant,
Rooted and helpless, following the light
Without volition? Or am I a beast,
Led by desire into the hunter's snare?
Am I a savage, swayed by every wish,
Brutal and feeble, a ferocious child?
Stand back, Desire, and put your plea in words.
No wordless wailing for the summer moon—
No Gilpin race on some strong appetite—
Stand here before the King, and make your plea.
If Reason sees it just, you have your wish;
If not, your wish is vain, plead as you will.
The court is open, beggar! I am King!

IN DUTY BOUND.

In duty bound, a life hemmed in
 Whichever way the spirit turns to look--
No chance of breaking out, except by sin--
 Not even room to shirk--
 Simply to live, and work.

An obligation pre-imposed, unsought,
 Yet binding with the force of natural law ;
The pressure of antagonistic thought ;
 Aching within, each hour,
 A sense of wasting power.

A narrow house with roof so darkly low
 The heavy rafters shut the sunlight out ;
One cannot stand erect without a blow ;
 Until the soul inside
 Shrieks for a grave—more wide.

A consciousness that if this thing endure
 The common joys of life will dull the pain ;
The high ideals of the grand and pure
 Die, as of course they must,
 Of long disuse and rust.

That is the worst. It takes supernal strength
 To hold the attitude that brings the pain ;
And they are few indeed but stoop at length
 To something less than best,
 To find, in stooping, rest.

THE LESSON OF DEATH.

TO S. T. D.

In memory of one whose breath
 Blessed all with words wise, loving, brave ;
 Whose life was service, and whose death
 Unites our hearts around her grave.

* * * * *

Another blow has fallen, Lord—

Was it from thee ?

Is it indeed thy fiery sword
 That cuts our hearts ? We know thy word—
 We know by heart wherein it saith
 “ Whom the Lord loves he chasteneth ”—
 But also, in another breath,
 This : “ The wages of sin is death.”

How may we tell what pain is good,

In mercy sent ?

And what is evil through and through,
 Sure consequence of what we do,
 Sure product of thy broken laws,
 Certain effect of given cause,
 Just punishment ?

Not sin of those who suffer, Lord—

To them no shame.

For father's sins our children die
 With Justice sitting idly by ;

The guilty thrive nor yet repent,
While sorrow strikes the innocent—
Whom shall we blame?

'Tis not that one alone is dead
And these bereft—
For her, for them, we grieve indeed;
But there are other hearts that bleed!
All up and down the world so wide
We suffer, Lord, on every side—
We who are left.

See now, we bend our stricken hearts,
Patient and still—
Knowing thy laws are wholly just,
Knowing thy love commands our trust,
Knowing that good is God alone,
That pain and sorrow are our own,
And seeking out of all our pain
To struggle up to God again—
Teach us thy will!

When shall we learn by common joy
Broad as the sun,
By common effort, common fear,
All common life that holds us near,
And this great bitter common pain
Coming again and yet again—
That we are one?

Yea, one. We cannot sin apart—
Suffer alone—
Nor keep our goodness to ourselves
Like precious things on hidden shelves.
Because we each live not our best,
Some one must suffer for the rest—
For we are one!

Our pain is but the voice of wrong—
Lord, help us hear!
Teach us to see the truth at last,
To mend our future from our past,
To know thy laws and find them friends,
Leading us safe to lovely ends,
Thine own hand near.

Not one by doing right alone
Can mend the way;
But we must all do right together—
Love, help, and serve each other, whether
We joy or suffer. So at last
Shall needless pain and death be past,
And we, thy children living here,
Be worthy of our father dear!—
God speed the day!

* * * * *

O help us, Father, from this loss
To learn thy will!

So shall our lost one live again ;
So shall her life not pass in vain ;
So shall we show in better living—
In loving, helping, doing, giving—
 That she lives still !

W O M A N .

SHE WALKETH VEILED AND SLEEPING.

She walketh veiled and sleeping,
For she knoweth not her power;
She obeyeth but the pleading
Of her heart, and the high leading
Of her soul, unto this hour.
Slow advancing, halting, creeping,
Comes the Woman to the hour!—
She walketh veiled and sleeping,
For she knoweth not her power.

GIRLS OF TO-DAY.

Girls of to-day! Give ear!
Never since time began
Has come to the race of man
A year, a day, an hour,
So full of promise and power
As the time that now is here!

Never in all the lands
Was there a power so great,
To move the wheels of state—
To lift up body and mind—
To waken the deaf and blind—
As the power that is in your hands!

Here at the gates of gold
You stand in the pride of youth,
Strong in courage and truth,
Stirred by a force kept back
Through centuries long and black,
Armed with a power threefold!

First: You are makers of men!
Then Be the things you preach!
Let your own greatness teach!
When mothers like this you see
Men will be strong and free—
Then, and not till then!

Second : Since Adam fell,
Have you not heard it said
That men by women are led ?
True is the saying—true !
See to it what you do !
See that you lead them well !

Third : You have work of your own !
Maid and mother and wife,
Look in the face of life !
There are duties you owe the race !
Outside your dwelling place
There is work for you alone !

Maid and mother and wife,
See your own work be done !
Be worthy a noble son !
Help man in the upward way !
Truly, a girl to-day
Is the strongest thing in life !

WOMEN OF TO-DAY.

You women of to-day who fear so much
The women of the future, showing how
The dangers of her course are such and such —
What are you now ?

Mothers and Wives and Housekeepers, forsooth !
Great names ! you cry, full scope to rule and please !
Room for wise age and energetic youth !—
But are you these ?

Housekeepers ? Do you then, like those of yore,
Keep house with power and pride, with grace and
ease ?
No, you keep servants only ! What is more,
You don't keep these !

Wives, say you ? Wives ! Blessed indeed are they
Who hold of love the everlasting keys,
Keeping their husbands' hearts ! Alas the day !
You don't keep these !

And mothers ? Pitying Heaven ! Mark the cry
From cradle death-beds ! Mothers on their knees !
Why, half the children born—as children die !
You don't keep these !

And still the wailing babies come and go,
And homes are waste, and husbands' hearts fly far,
There is no hope until you dare to know
The thing you are !

TO MOTHERS.

In the name of your ages of anguish!
In the name of the curse and the stain!
By the strength of your sorrow I call you!
By the power of your pain!

We are Mothers. Through us in our bondage,
Through us with the brand in the face—
Be we fettered with gold or with iron—
Through us comes the race!

With the weight of all sin on our shoulders,
Midst the serpents of shame ever curled,
We have sat, unresisting, defenseless,
Making the men of the world.

We were ignorant long, and our children
Were besotted and brutish and blind,
King-driven, priest-ridden—who were they?
Our children—mankind!

We were kept for our beauty, our softness,
Our sex;—what reward do ye find?
We transmit, must transmit, being mothers,
What we are to mankind!

As the mother, so follow the children!
No nation, wise, noble, and brave,
Ever sprang—though the father had freedom—
From the mother—a slave!

Look now at the world as ye find it!
Blench not! Truth is kinder than lies!
Look now at the world—see it suffer!
Listen now to its cries!

See the people who suffer—all people!
All humanity wasting its powers
In a hand to hand struggle, death-dealing—
All children of ours!

The blind millionaire—the blind harlot—
The blind preacher leading the blind—
Only think of their pain, how it hurts them!
Our little blind babies—mankind!

Shall we bear it, we mothers who love them?
Can we bear it, we mothers who feel
Every pang of our babes, and forgive them
Every sin when they kneel?

Little stumbling world! You have fallen!
You are crying in darkness and fear!
Wait, darling—your mother is coming!
Hush, darling—your mother is here!

We are here like an army with banners,
The great flag of our freedom unfurled!
With us rests the fate of the nations.
For we make the world!

Dare ye sleep while your children are calling ?
Dare ye wait while they clamor unfed ?
Dare ye pray in the proud pillared churches
While they suffer for bread ?

If the father hath sinned, he shall answer ;
If he check thee, laugh back at his powers.
Shall a mother be kept from her children ?
These people are ours !

They are ours ! He is ours, for we made him !
In our arms he has nestled and smiled !
Shall we, the world-mothers, be hindered
By the freaks of a child ?

Rise now, in the power of The Woman !
Rise now, in the hour of our need !
The world cries in hunger and darkness !
We shall light ! We shall feed !

In the name of our ages of anguish ;
In the name of the curse and the stain ;
By the strength of our sorrow we conquer !—
In the power of our pain !

“ WE, AS WOMEN.”

There's a cry in the air about us —
We hear it before—behind —
Of the way in which “ We, as women,”
Are going to lift mankind !

With our white frocks starched and ruffled,
And our soft hair brushed and curled —
Hats off ! for “ we, as women,”
Are coming to help the world !

Fair sisters, listen one moment —
And perhaps you'll pause for ten —
The business of women as women
Is only with men as men !

What we do, “ we, as women,”
We have done all through our life ;
The work that is ours as women
Is the work of mother and wife !

But to elevate public opinion,
And to lift up erring man,
Is the work of the Human Being—
Let us do it—if we can.

But wait, warm-hearted sisters—
Not quite so fast, so far—
Tell me how we are going to lift a thing
Any higher than we are !

We are going to "purify politics,"
And to "elevate the press."
We enter the foul paths of the world
To sweeten and cleanse and bless.

To hear the high things we are going to do,
And the horrors of man we tell,
One would think "we, as women," were angels
And our brothers were fiends of hell.

We, that were born of one mother,
And reared in the selfsame place—
In the school and the church together—
We, of one blood, one race!

Now then, all forward together!
But remember, every one,
That it is not by feminine innocence
The work of the world is done.

The world needs strength and courage,
And wisdom to help and feed—
When "we, as women," bring these to man
We shall lift the world indeed!

SIX HOURS A DAY.

Six hours a day the woman spends on food!
Six mortal hours a day. * * *
With fire and water toiling, heat and cold—
Struggling with laws she does not understand
Of chemistry and physics, and the weight
Of poverty and ignorance beside.
Toiling for those she loves, the added strain
Of tense emotion on her humble skill,
The sensitiveness born of love and fear
Making it harder to do even work.
Toiling without release, no hope ahead
Of taking up another business soon,
Of varying the task she finds too hard—
This, her career, so closely interknit
With holier demands as deep as life
That to refuse to cook is held the same
As to refuse her wife and motherhood.
Six mortal hours a day to handle food—
Prepare it, serve it, clean it all away—
With allied labors of the stove and tub,
The pan, the dishcloth, and the scrubbing-brush.
Developing forever in her brain
The power to do this work in which she lives;
While the slow finger of Heredity
Writes on the forehead of each living man,
Strive as he may, "His mother was a cook!"

REASSURANCE.

Can you imagine nothing better, brother,
Than that which you have always had before?
Have you been so content with "wife and mother"
You dare hope nothing more?

Have you forever prized her, praised her, sung her,
The happy queen of a most happy reign?
Never dishonored her, despised her, flung her
Derision and disdain?

Go ask the literature of all the ages!
Books that were written before women read—
Pagan and Christian, satirists and sages—
Read what the world has said!

There was no power on earth to bid you slacken
The generous hand that painted her disgrace!
There was no shame on earth too black to blacken
That much praised woman-face!

Eve and Pandora!—always you begin it—
The ancients called her Sin and Shame and Death!
"There is no evil without a woman in it,"
The modern proverb saith!

She has been yours in uttermost possession—
Your slave, your mother, your well-chosen bride—
And you have owned, in million-fold confession,
You were not satisfied.

Peace then ! Fear not the coming woman, brother !
Owning herself, she giveth all the more !
She shall be better woman, wife, and mother
Than man hath known before !

BALLADE OF YE GENTIL MAYDE.

Shee was a mayde, a gentil mayde,
Her hearte was softe and kynde,
And yet shee lyked her horse's tayle
Cut off behynde, behynde—
Cut off full shorte behynde.

With blynders, checks, and martyngales
That hapless beaste was tyde,
Or else her sadylle galled his backe
Whenever shee did ryde.
O why not sit astride ?

Shee had a dogge, a lyttel dogge,
Shee wore him on a chayne,
Shee made him fatte, shee made him sickke,
And so he dyed in payne—
Alas, he dyed in payne !

Shee had a flower, a lovely flower,
Which languished in a potte,
Shee tho't it was its nature to—
But then you know it's notte !
Of course we know it's notte !

She had a byrde, a yellow byrde,
Life-prisoned in a cayge!
'Tis naught, sayth shee, because you see
He was born in that same cayge—
Or caught at a tender ayge.

As if, forsooth, when men were slaves,
It added to their glee
To have theyre sires, and eke themselves,
Born into slaveree!
Born fast in slaveree!

But O this mayde! This gentil mayde!
Shee wore upon her hedde
A hatte the ornaments of which
Were bodies of the dedde!
Just fragments of the dedde!

The feathers of dedde byrdes shee wore.
Tayles of the slaughtered beaste.
Theyre lyttel heddies her buttons were—
Shee wore a score at leaste!
A score of deaths at leaste!

O gentil mayde! O lovely mayde!
With mylde and tender eye!
Why is it for youre pleasuring
These lyttel ones must dye?
These helpless ones must dye?

FEMININE VANITY.

Feminine Vanity! O ye Gods! Hear to this man!
As if silk and velvet and feathers and fur
And jewels and gold had been just for her,
Since the world began!

Where is his memory? Let him look back—all
of the way!
Let him study the history of his race
From the first he-savage that painted his face,
To the dude of to-day!

Vanity! Oh! Are the twists and curls,
The intricate patterns in red, black, and blue,
The wearisome tortures of rich tattoo,
Just made for girls?

Is it only the squaw who files the teeth,
And dangles the lip, and bores the ear,
And wears bracelet and necklet and anklet as
queer
As the bones beneath?

Look at the soldier, the noble, the king!
Egypt or Greece or Rome discloses
The purples and perfumes and gems and roses
On a masculine thing!

Look at the men of our own dark ages!
Heroes too, in their cloth of gold,
With jewels as thick as the cloth could hold,
On the knights and pages!

We wear false hair? Our man looks big!
But it's not so long, let me beg to state,
Since every gentleman shaved his pate
And wore a wig.

French heels? Sharp toes? See our feet defaced?
But there was a day when the soldier free
Tied the toe of his shoe to the manly knee—
Yes, and even his waist!

We pad and stuff?—our man looks bolder.
Don't speak of the time when a bran-filled bunch
Made an English gentleman look like Punch—
But feel of his shoulder!

Feminine Vanity! O ye Gods! Hear to these men!
Vanity's wide as the world is wide!
Look at the peacock in his pride—
Is it a hen!

FEMALES.

The female fox she is a fox ;
The female whale a whale ;
The female eagle holds her place
As representative of race
As truly as the male.

The mother hen doth scratch for her chicks,
And scratch for herself beside ;
The mother cow doth nurse her calf,
Yet fares as well as her other half
In the pasture free and wide.

The female bird doth soar in air ;
The female fish doth swim ;
The fleet-foot mare upon the course
Doth hold her own with the flying horse--
Yea, and she beateth him !

One female in the world we find
Telling a different tale.
It is the female of our race
Who holds a parasitic place
Dependent on the male.

Not so, saith she, ye slander me !
No parasite am I !
I earn my living as a wife ;
My children take my very life —

Why should I share in human strife--
To plant and build and buy?

The human race holds highest place
In all the world so wide,
Yet these inferior females wive,
And raise their little ones alive,
And feed themselves beside.

The race is higher than the sex,
Though sex be fair and good;
A Human Creature is your state,
And to be human is more great
Than even womanhood!

The female fox she is a fox;
The female whale a whale;
The female eagle holds her place
As representative of race
As truly as the male!

UNSEXED.

It was wild rebellious drone
That loudly did complain;
He wished he was a worker bee
With all his might and main.

"I want to work," the drone declared.
Quoth they, "The thing you mean
Is that you scorn to be a drone
And long to be a queen.

"You long to lay unnumbered eggs,
And rule the waiting throng;
You long to lead our summer flight,
And this is rankly wrong."

Cried he, "My life is pitiful!
I only eat and wed,
And in my marriage is the end--
Thereafter I am dead.

"I would I were the busy bee
That flits from flower to flower;
I long to share in work and care
And feel the worker's power."

Quoth they, "The life you dare to spurn
Is set before you here
As your one great, prescribed, ordained,
Divinely ordered sphere!

“ Without your services as drone,
We should not be alive ;
Your modest task, when well fulfilled,
Preserves the busy hive.

“ Why underrate your blessed power ?
Why leave your rightful throne
To choose a field of life that’s made
For working bees alone ? ”

Cried he, “ But it is not enough,
My momentary task !
Let me do that and more beside —
To work is all I ask ! ”

Then fiercely rose the workers all,
For sorely were they vexed ;
“ O wretch ! ” they cried, “ should this betide
You would become *unsexed* ! ”

And yet he had not sighed for eggs,
Nor yet for royal mien ;
He longed to be a worker bee,
But not to be a queen.

THE HOLY STOVE.

O the soap-vat is a common thing!
The pickle-tub is low!
The loom and wheel have lost their grace
In falling from the dwelling place
To mills where all may go!
The bread-tray needeth not your love;
The wash-tub wide doth roam;
Even the oven free may rove;
But bow ye down to the Holy Stove,
The Altar of the Home!

Before it bend the worshipers
And wreaths of parsley twine,
Above it still the incense curls,
And a passing train of hired girls
Do service at the shrine.
We toil to keep the altar crowned
With dishes new and nice,
And Art and Love and Time and Truth
We offer up, with Health and Youth,
In daily sacrifice.

Speak not to us of a fairer faith,
Of a lifetime free from pain —
Our fathers always worshiped here,
Our mothers served this altar drear,
And still we serve amain.

Our earliest dreams around it cling,
Bright hopes that childhood sees,
And memory leaves a vista wide
Where Mother's Doughnuts rank beside
The thought of Mother's Knees.

The wood-box hath no sanctity;
No glamor gilds the coal;
But the Cook-Stove is a sacred thing
To which a reverent faith we bring
And serve with heart and soul.
The Home's a temple all divine,
By the Poker and the Hod!
The Holy Stove is the altar fine—
The wife the priestess at the shrine—
Now who can be the god?

A BROOD MARE.

It is a significant fact that the phenomenal improvement in horses during the last fifteen years is accompanied by the growing conviction that good points and a good record are as desirable in the dam as in the sire, if not more so.

I had a quarrel yesterday,
A violent dispute,
With a man who tried to sell to me
A strange amorphous brute,

A creature disproportionate,
A beast to make you stare,
An undeveloped, overgrown,
Outrageous-looking mare.

Her fore legs they were weak and thin,
Her hind legs weak and fat,
She was heavy in the quarters,
With a narrow chest and flat ;

And she had managed to combine—
I'm sure I don't know how—
The barrel of a greyhound
With the belly of a cow.

She seemed exceeding feeble,
And he owned with manner bland
That she walked a little, easily,
But was n't fit to stand.

I tried to mount the animal
To test her on the track ;
But he cried in real anxiety,
“Get off! You’ll strain her back!”

And then I sought to harness her,
But he explained at length
That any draught or carriage work
Was quite beyond her strength.

“No use to carry or to pull!
No use upon the course!”
Said I, “How can you have the face
To call that thing a horse?”

Said he, indignantly, “I don’t!
I’m dealing on the square;
I never said it was a horse,
I told you ’t was a mare!

“A mare was never meant to race,
To carry, or to pull;
She is meant for breeding only, so
Her place in life is full.”

Said I, “Do you pretend to breed
From such a beast as that?
A mass of shapeless skin and bone,
Or shapeless skin and fat?”

Said he, "Her sire was thoroughbred,
As fine as walked the earth,
And all her colts receive from him
The marks of noble birth ;

"And then I mate her carefully
With horses fine and fit—
Mares do not need to have themselves
The points which they transmit!"

Said I, "Do you pretend to say .
You can raise colts as fair
From that fat cripple as you can
From an able-bodied mare?"

Quoth he, "I solemnly assert,
Just as I said before,
A mare that's good for breeding
Can be good for nothing more!"

Cried I, "One thing is certain proof;
One thing I want to see;
Trot out the noble colts you raise
From your anomaly."

He looked a little dashed at this,
And the poor mare hung her head ;
"Fact is," said he, "she's had but one
And that one—well, it's dead!"

FALSE PLAY.

“Do you love me?” asked the mother of her child,
And the baby answered, “No!”
Great Love listened and sadly smiled;
He knew the love in the heart of the child—
That you could not wake it so.

“Do not love me?” the foolish mother cried,
And the baby answered, “No!”
He knew the worth of the trick she tried—
Great Love listened, and grieving, sighed
That the mother scorned him so.

“Oh, poor mama!” and she played her part
Till the baby’s strength gave way;
He knew it was false in his inmost heart,
But he could not bear that her tears should start,
So he joined in the lying play.

“Then love mama!” and the soft lips crept
To the kiss that his love should show—
The mouth to speak while the spirit slept!
Great Love listened, and blushed, and wept
That they blasphemed him so.

TO THE YOUNG WIFE.

Are you content, you pretty three-years' wife?
Are you content and satisfied to live
On what your loving husband loves to give,
And give to him your life?

Are you content with work—to toil alone,
To clean things dirty and to soil things clean,
To be a kitchen-maid—be called a queen—
Queen of a cook-stove throne?

Are you content to reign in that small space—
A wooden palace and a yard-fenced land—
With other queens abundant on each hand,
Each fastened in her place?

Are you content to rear your children so?
Untaught yourself, untrained, perplexed, distressed,
Are you so sure your way is always best?
That you can always know?

Have you forgotten how you used to long
In days of ardent girlhood, to be great,
To help the groaning world, to serve the state,
To be so wise—so strong?

And are you quite convinced this is the way,
The only way a woman's duty lies —
Knowing all women so have shut their eyes?
Seeing the world to-day?

Have you no dream of life in fuller store?
Of growing to be more than that you are?
Doing the things you now do better far,
Yet doing others — more?

Losing no love, but finding as you grew
That as you entered upon nobler life
You so became a richer sweeter wife,
A wiser mother too?

What holds you? Ah, my dear, it is your throne,
Your paltry queenship in that narrow place,
Your antique labors, your restricted space,
Your working all alone!

Be not deceived! 'Tis not your wifely bond
That holds you, nor the mother's royal power,
But selfish slavish service hour by hour —
A life with no beyond!

AN OLD PROVERB.

"As much pity to see a woman weep as to see a goose go barefoot."

No escape, little creature ! The earth hath no place
For the woman who seeketh to fly from her race.
Poor, ignorant, timid, too helpless to roam,
The woman must bear what befalls her, at home.
Bear bravely, bear dumbly—it is but the same
That all others endure who live under the name—
No escape, little creature !

No escape under heaven ! Can man treat you worse
After God has laid on you his infinite curse ?
The heaviest burden of sorrow you win
Cannot weigh with the load of original sin ;
No shame be too black for the cowering face
Of her who brought shame to the whole human race !
No escape under heaven !

Yet you feel, being human. You shrink from the
pain
That each child, born a woman, must suffer again.
From the strongest of bonds heart can feel, man
can shape,
You cannot rebel, or appeal, or escape.
You must bear and endure. If the heart cannot
sleep,
And the pain groweth bitter—too bitter—then
weep !
For you feel, being human.

And she wept, being woman. The numberless years
Have counted her burdens and counted her tears ;
The maid wept forsaken, the mother forlorn
For the child that was dead, and the child that
was born.

Wept for joy—as a miracle!—wept in her pain!
Wept aloud, wept in secret, wept ever in vain!
Still she weeps, being woman.

THE CHILD SPEAKS.

Get back ! Give me air ! Give me freedom and
room,
The warm earth and bright water, the crowding
sweet bloom
Of the flowers, and the measureless marvelous sky—
All of these all the time, and a shelter close by
Where silence and beauty and peace are my own
In a chamber alone.

Then bring me the others ! “ A child ” is a crime ;
It is “ children ” who grow through the beautiful
time
Of their childhood up into the age you are in—
“ A child ” must needs suffer and sicken and sin—
The life of a child needs the life of its kind,
O ye stupid and blind !

Then the best of your heart and the best of your
brain !

The face of all beauty ! The soul without stain !
Your noblest ! Your wisest ! With us is the place
To consecrate life to the good of the race !

That our childhood may pass with the best you
can give,

And our manhood so live !

The wisdom of years, the experience deep
That shall laugh with our waking and watch with
our sleep,

The patience of age, the keen honor of youth,
To guide us in doing and teach us in truth,
With the garnered ripe fruit of the world at our feet,
Both the bitter and sweet !

What is this that you offer ? One man's narrow
purse !

One woman's strained life, and a heart straining
worse !

Confined as in prisons—held down as in caves—
The teaching of tyrants—the service of slaves—
The garments of falsehood and bondage—the weight
Of your own evil state.

And what is this brought as atonement for these ?
For our blind misdirection, our death and disease ;
For the grief of our childhood, the loss and the
wrong ;

For the shame and the sin and the sorrow thereof —
Dare you say it is love ?

Love ? First give freedom — the right of the brute !
The air with its sunshine, the earth with its fruit.
Love ? First give wisdom — intelligent care,
That shall help to bring out all the good that is there.
Love ? First give justice ! There's nothing above ! —
And then you may love !

MOTHER TO CHILD.

How best can I serve thee, my child ! My child !
Flesh of my flesh and dear heart of my heart !
Once thou wast within me — I held thee — I fed
thee —

By the force of my loving and longing I led thee —
Now we are apart !

I may blind thee with kisses and crush with embracing,
Thy warm mouth in my neck and our arms interlacing,
But here in my body my soul lives alone,
And thou answerest me from a house of thine own —
That house which I builded !

Which we builded together, thy father and I —
In which thou must live, O my darling, and die !

Not one stone can I alter, not one atom relay —
Not to save or defend thee or help thee to stay —
That gift is completed !

How best can I serve thee ? O child, if they knew
How my heart aches with loving ! How deep and
how true,
How brave and enduring, how patient, how strong,
How longing for good and how fearful of wrong,
Is the love of thy mother !

Could I crown thee with riches ! Surround, over-
flow thee
With fame and with power till the whole world
should know thee ;
With wisdom and genius to hold the world still,
To bring laughter and tears, joy and pain, at thy will,
Still—*thou* mightst not be happy !

Such have lived—and in sorrow. The greater the
mind

The wider and deeper the grief it can find.
The richer, the gladder, the more thou canst feel
The keen stings that a lifetime is sure to reveal.
O my child ! Must thou suffer ?

Is there no way my life can save thine from a pain ?
Is the love of a mother no possible gain ?
No labor of Hercules—search for the Grail—
No way for this wonderful love to avail ?
God in Heaven—O teach me !

My prayer has been answered. The pain thou must
bear

Is the pain of the world's life which thy life must
share.

Thou art one with the world -- though I love thee
the best ;

And to save thee from pain I must save all the rest --
Well -- with God's help I'll do it !

Thou art one with the rest. I must love thee in them.
Thou wilt sin with the rest -- and thy mother must
stem

The world's sin. Thou wilt weep -- and thy mother
must dry

The tears of the world lest her darling should cry !
I will do it -- God helping !

And I stand not alone. I will gather a band
Of all loving mothers from land unto land.
Our children are part of the world ! do ye hear ?
They are one with the world -- we must hold them
all dear !

Love all for the child's sake !

For the sake of my child I must hasten to save
All the children on earth from the jail and the grave.
For so, and so only, I lighten the share
Of the pain of the world that my darling must bear --
Even so, and so only !

TO MAN.

In dark and early ages, through the primal forests
faring,

Ere the soul came shining into prehistoric night,
Two-fold man was equal ; they were comrades dear
and daring,

Living wild and free together in unreasoning delight.

Ere the soul was born and consciousness came
slowly,

Ere the soul was born, to man and woman too,
Ere he found the Tree of Knowledge, that awful
tree and holy,

Ere he knew he felt, and knew he knew.

Then said he to Pain, "I am wise now and I
know you !

No more will I suffer while power and wisdom last !"

Then said he to Pleasure, "I am strong, and I
will show you

That the will of man can seize you ; aye, and hold
you fast !"

Food he ate for pleasure, and wine he drank for
gladness,

And woman ? Ah, the woman ! the crown of all
delight !—

His now—he knew it ! He was strong to madness
In that early dawning after prehistoric night.

His -- his forever ! That glory sweet and tender !
Ah, but he would love her ! And she should love
but him !

He would work and struggle for her, he would
shelter and defend her --

She should never leave him, never, till their eyes
in death were dim.

Close, close he bound her, that she should leave
him never ;

Weak still he kept her, lest she be strong to flee ;
And the fainting flame of passion he kept alive
forever

With all the arts and forces of earth and sky and sea.

And ah, the long journey ! The slow and awful ages
They have labored up together, blind and crippled,
all astray !

Through what a mighty volume, with a million
shameful pages,

From the freedom of the forest to the prisons of
to-day !

Food he ate for pleasure, and it slew him with
diseases !

Wine he drank for gladness, and it led the way
to crime !

And woman ? He will hold her -- he will have
her when he pleases --

And he never once hath seen her since the pre-
historic time !

Gone the friend and comrade of the day when life
was younger,

She who rests and comforts, she who helps and saves ;
Still he seeks her vainly, with a never-dying hunger ;
Alone beneath his tyrants, alone above his slaves !

Toiler, bent and weary with the load of thine own
making !

Thou who art sad and lonely, though lonely all in
vain !

Who hast sought to conquer Pleasure and have
her for the taking,

And found that Pleasure only was another name
for Pain --

Nature hath reclaimed thee, forgiving dispossession !
God hath not forgotten, though man doth still for-
get !

The woman - soul is rising, in despite of thy trans-
gression --

Loose her now -- and trust her ! She will love thee
yet !

Love thee ? She will love thee as only freedom
knoweth !

Love thee ? She will love thee while Love itself
doth live !

Fear not the heart of woman ! No bitterness it
showeth !

The ages of her sorrow have but taught her to
forgive !

SHE WHO IS TO COME.

A woman—in so far as she beholdeth
Her one Beloved's face :
A mother—with a great heart that enfoldeth
The children of the Race :
A body, free and strong, with that high beauty
That comes of perfect use, is built thereof :
A mind where Reason ruleth over Duty,
And Justice reigns with Love :
A self-poised royal soul, brave, wise, and tender,
No longer blind and dumb :
A Human Being, of an unknown splendor,
Is she who is to come !

OUR HUMAN KIND.

SIMILAR CASES.

There was once a little animal,
No bigger than a fox,
And on five toes he scampered
Over Tertiary rocks.
They called him Eohippus,
And they called him very small,
And they thought him of no value—
When they thought of him at all;
For the lumpish Dinoceras
And Coryphodon so slow
Were the heavy aristocracy
In days of long ago.
Said the little Eohippus,
“I am going to be a horse!
And on my middle finger-nails
To run my earthly course!

I'm going to have a flowing tail!
I'm going to have a mane!
I'm going to stand fourteen hands high
On the psychozoic plain!"

The Coryphodon was horrified,
The Dinoceras shocked;
And they chased young Eohippus,
But he skipped away and mocked.
Then they laughed enormous laughter,
And they groaned enormous groans,
And they bade young Eohippus
Go view his father's bones.
Said they, "You always were as small
And mean as now we see,
And therefore it is evident
That you're always going to be.
What? Be a great, tall, handsome beast,
With hoofs to gallop on?
Why! You'd have to change your nature!"
Said the Loxolophodon.
They considered him disposed of,
And retired with gait serene—
That was the way they argued
In "the early Eocene."

There was once an Anthropoidal Ape,
Far smarter than the rest,
And everything that they could do
He always did the best;

So they naturally disliked him,
And they gave him shoulders cool,
And when they had to mention him
They said he was a fool.

Cried this pretentious Ape one day,
"I'm going to be a Man!
And stand upright, and hunt, and fight,
And conquer all I can!
I'm going to cut down forest trees
To make my houses higher!
I'm going to kill the Mastodon!
I'm going to make a fire!"

Loud screamed the Anthropoidal Apes
With laughter wild and gay;
They tried to catch that boastful one,
But he always got away.
So they yelled at him in chorus,
Which he minded not a whit;
And they pelted him with cocoanuts,
Which didn't seem to hit.
And then they gave him reasons
Which they thought of much avail,
To prove how his preposterous
Attempt was sure to fail.
Said the sages, "In the first place,
The thing cannot be done!
And second, if it *could* be,
It would not be any fun!

And third, and most conclusive,
And admitting no reply,
You would have to change your nature !
We should like to see you try !”
They chuckled then triumphantly,
These lean and hairy shapes,
For these things passed as arguments
With the Anthropoidal Apes.

There was once a Neolithic Man,
An enterprising wight,
Who made his chopping implements
Unusually bright,
Unusually clever he,
Unusually brave,
And he drew delightful Mammoths
On the borders of his cave.
To his Neolithic neighbors,
Who were startled and surprised,
Said he, “My friends, in course of time,
We shall be civilized !
We are going to live in cities !
We are going to fight in wars !
We are going to eat three times a day
Without the natural cause !
We are going to turn life upside down
About a thing called gold !
We are going to want the earth, and take
As much as we can hold !

We are going to wear great piles of stuff
Outside our proper skins!
We are going to have Diseases!
And Accomplishments!! And Sins!!!”

Then they all rose up in fury
Against their boastful friend,
For prehistoric patience
Cometh quickly to an end.
Said one, “This is chimerical!
Utopian! Absurd!”
Said another, “What a stupid life!
Too dull, upon my word!”
Cried all, “Before such things can come,
You idiotic child,
You must alter Human Nature!”
And they all sat back and smiled.
Thought they, “An answer to that last
It will be hard to find!”
It was a clinching argument
To the Neolithic Mind!

A CONSERVATIVE.

The garden beds I wandered by
One bright and cheerful morn,
When I found a new-fledged butterfly
A-sitting on a thorn,

A black and crimson butterfly,
All doleful and forlorn.

I thought that life could have no sting
To infant butterflies,
So I gazed on this unhappy thing
With wonder and surprise,
While sadly with his waying wing
He wiped his weeping eyes.

Said I, "What can the matter be?
Why weepest thou so sore?
With garden fair and sunlight free
And flowers in goodly store—"
But he only turned away from me
And burst into a roar.

Cried he, "My legs are thin and few
Where once I had a swarm!
Soft fuzzy fur—a joy to view—
Once kept my body warm!
Before these flapping wing-things grew,
To hamper and deform!"

At that outrageous bug I shot
The fury of mine eye;
Said I, in scorn all burning hot,
In rage and anger high,
"You ignominious idiot!
Those wings are made to fly!"

"I do not want to fly," said he,
 "I only want to squirm!"
And he drooped his wings dejectedly,
 But still his voice was firm;
"I do not want to be a fly!
 I want to be a worm!"

O yesterday of unknown lack!
 To-day of unknown bliss!
I left my fool in red and black,
 The last I saw was this,
The creature madly climbing back
 Into his chrysalis.

THE SURVIVAL OF THE FITTEST

In northern zones the ranging bear
Protects himself with fat and hair.
Where snow is deep, and ice is stark,
And half the year is cold and dark,
He still survives a clime like that
By growing fur, by growing fat.
These traits, O Bear, which thou transmittest,
Prove the survival of the fittest!

To polar regions, waste and wan,
Comes the encroaching race of man;

A puny feeble little lubber —
He had no fur, he had no blubber.
The scornful bear sat down at ease
To see the stranger starve and freeze;
But lo! the stranger slew the bear,
And ate his fat, and wore his hair!
These deeds, O Man, which thou committest,
Prove the survival of the fittest!

In modern times the millionaire
Protects himself as did the bear.
Where Poverty and Hunger are,
He counts his bullion by the car.
Where thousands suffer, still he thrives,
And after death his will survives.
The wealth, O Cræsus, thou transmittest
Proves the survival of the fittest!

But lo! some people, odd and funny,
Some men without a cent of money,
The simple common Human Race,
Chose to improve their dwelling-place.
They had no use for millionaires;
They calmly said the world was theirs;
They were so wise — so strong — so many —
The millionaire? There was n't any!
These deeds, O Man, which thou committest,
Prove the survival of the fittest!

AN OBSTACLE.

I was climbing up a mountain-path
With many things to do,
Important business of my own,
And other people's too,
When I ran against a Prejudice
That quite cut off the view.

My work was such as could not wait,
My path quite clearly showed,
My strength and time were limited,
I carried quite a load,
And there that hulking Prejudice
Sat all across the road.

So I spoke to him politely,
For he was huge and high,
And begged that he would move a bit
And let me travel by—
He smiled, but as for moving!—
He didn't even try.

And then I reasoned quietly
With that colossal mule;
My time was short—no other path—
The mountain winds were cool—
I argued like a Solomon,
He sat there like a fool.

Then I flew into a passion,
I danced and howled and swore,
I pelted and belabored him
Till I was stiff and sore ;
He got as mad as I did—
But he sat there as before.

And then I begged him on my knees—
I might be kneeling still
If so I hoped to move that mass
Of obdurate ill-will—
As well invite the monument
To vacate Bunker Hill !

So I sat before him helpless,
In an ecstasy of woe—
The mountain mists were rising fast,
The sun was sinking slow—
When a sudden inspiration came,
As sudden winds do blow.

I took my hat, I took my stick,
My load I settled fair,
I approached that awful incubus
With an absent-minded air—
And I walked directly through him,
As if he wasn't there !

WHAT'S THAT?

I met a little person on my land,
A-fishing in the waters of my stream;
He seemed a man, yet could not understand
Things that to most men very simple seem.

"Get off!" said I; "this land is mine, my friend!"
"Get out!" said I; "this brook belongs to me!
I own the land, and you must make an end
Of fishing here so free."

"I own this place, the land and water too!
You have no right to be here, that is flat!
Get off it! That is all I ask of you!—"
"Own it?" said he; "what's that?"

"What's that?" said I, "why that is common sense!
I own the water and the fishing right;
I own the land from here to yonder fence;
Get off, my friend, or fight!"

He looked at the clear stream so neatly kept;
He looked at teeming vine and laden tree,
And wealthy fields of grain that stirred and slept—
"I see!" he cried, "I see!"

"You mean you cut the wood and plowed the field,
From your hard labor all this beauty grew,
To you is due the richness of the yield—
You have some claim, 't is true."

"Not so," said I, with manner very cool,
And tossed my purse into the air and caught it;
"Do I look like a laborer, you fool?
It's mine because I bought it!"

Again he looked as if I talked in Greek,
Again he scratched his head and twirled his hat,
Before he mustered wit enough to speak --
"Bought it?" said he, "what's that?"

And then he said again, "I see! I see!
You mean that some men toiled with plows and
hoes,
And while those worked for you you toiled with glee
At other work for those."

"Not so!" said I, getting a little hot,
Thinking the man a fool as well as funny,
"I'm not a workingman, you idiot,
I bought it with my money!"

And still that creature stared and dropped his jaw,
Till I could have destroyed him where he sat --
"Money," said I, "money, and moneyed law!"
"Money?" said he, "what's that?"

CHRISTIAN VIRTUES.

Oh, dear!

The Christian virtues will disappear!
Nowhere on land or sea
Will be room for charity!
Nowhere, in field or city,
A person to help or pity!
Better for them, no doubt,
Not to need helping out
Of their old miry ditch.
But alas for us, the rich!
For we shall lose, you see,
Our boasted charity!—
Lose all the pride and joy
Of giving the poor employ,
And money, and food, and love,
(And making stock thereof!)
Our Christian virtues are gone,
With nothing to practice on!

It don't hurt them a bit,
For they can't practice it;
But it's our great joy and pride—
What virtue have we beside?
We believe, as sure as we live,
That it is more blessed to give
Than to want, and waste, and grieve,
And occasionally receive!

And here are the people pressing
To rob us of our pet blessing!
No chance to endow or bedizen
A hospital, school, or prison,
And leave our own proud name
To Gratitude and Fame!
No chance to do one good deed,
To give what we do not need
To leave what we cannot use
To those whom we deign to choose!
When none want broken meat,
How shall our cake be sweet?
When none want flannels and coals,
How shall we save our souls?
Oh, dear! Oh, dear!
The Christian virtues will disappear!

The poor have their virtues rude—
Meekness and gratitude,
Endurance, and respect
For us, the world's elect,
Economy, self-denial,
Patience in every trial,
Self-sacrifice, self-restraint—
Virtues enough for a saint!
Virtues enough to bear
All this life's sorrow and care!
Virtues by which to rise
To a front seat in the skies!

How can they turn from this
To common earthly bliss—
Mere clothes, and food, and drink,
And leisure to read and think,
And art, and beauty, and ease—
There is no crown for these!
True, if their gratitude
Were not for fire and food,
They might still learn to bless
The Lord for their happiness!
And, instead of respect for wealth,
Might learn from beauty, and health,
And freedom in power and pelf,
Each man to respect himself!
And, instead of scraping and saving,
Might learn from using and having
That man's life should be spent
In a grand development!
But this is petty and small—
These are not virtues at all—
They do not look as they should—
They don't do *us* any good!
Oh, dear! Oh, dear! Oh, dear!
The Christian virtues will disappear!

WEDDED BLISS.

"O come and be my mate!" said the Eagle to the
Hen ;

"I love to soar, but then
I want my mate to rest
Forever in the nest!"
Said the Hen, "I cannot fly,
I have no wish to try,

But I joy to see my mate careering through the sky!"
They wed, and cried, "Ah, this is Love, my own!"
And the Hen sat, the Eagle soared, alone.

"O come and be my mate!" said the Lion to the
Sheep ;

"My love for you is deep!
I slay, a Lion should,
But you are mild and good!"
Said the Sheep, "I do no ill—
Could not, had I the will—

But I joy to see my mate pursue, devour, and kill."
They wed, and cried, "Ah, this is Love, my own!"
And the Sheep browsed, the Lion prowled, alone.

"O come and be my mate!" said the Salmon to the
Clam ;

"You are not wise, but I am,
I know sea and stream as well,
You know nothing but your shell."

Said the Clam, "I'm slow of motion,
But my love is all devotion,
And I joy to have my mate traverse lake and stream
and ocean !
They wed, and cried, "Ah, this is Love, my own !"
And the Clam sucked, the Salmon swam, alone.

THE SWEET USES OF ADVERSITY.

In Norway fiords, in summer time,
The Norway birch is fair ;
The white trunks shine, the green leaves twine,
The whole tree groweth tall and fine,
For all it wants is there—
Water and warmth and air—
Full fed in all its nature needs, and showing
That nature in perfection by its growing.

But follow the persistent tree
To the limit of endless snow—
There you may see what a birch can be !
The product showeth plain and free
How nobly plants can grow
With nine months winter slow.
'Tis fitted to survive in that position—
Developed by the force of bad condition.

See now what life the tree doth keep—

Branchless, three-leaved, and tough—

In June the leaf-buds peep, flowers in July dare creep
To bloom, the fruit in August, and then sleep.

Strong is the tree and rough,

It lives, and that's enough.

“Dog's-ear” the name the peasants call it by—

A Norway birch—and less than one inch high!

* * * * *

That silver monarch of the summer wood,

Tall, straight, and lovely, rich in all things good,

Knew not in his perversity

The sweeter uses of adversity!

A HOPE.

Are you tired, patient miner?

Digging slowly in the dark

With your tiny pick and shovel

At the wall of granite stark—

The awful wall of ignorance

The iron wall of sin,

The mountain weight that crowds you down

And holds you darkly in?

Does your gain seem less than nothing—
All in vain the work you do—
While you can't get out as you got in,
And yet cannot get through?

Then listen to a word of hope—
'Tis not about the sky—
'Tis not to bid you bear all this
For a ghostly by and by—

'Tis to tell you there is help at hand,
While there alone you bow;
That the daylight clear is coming near—
Yes, it is coming now!

Brave digger in your narrow hole
In that great wall of stone—
Be of good cheer—the end is near—
You have not worked alone!

Listen! Before—behind you—
Above—below—around—
A million miners rend the rock
With rolling waves of sound!

A million hands are tearing fast—
The rock is growing thin—
And soon the human heart shall range
Beyond the walls of sin!

THE AMŒBOID CELL.

Said the Specialized Cell to the Amœboid Cell,
Why don't you develop like me?
Just combine with the others,
Unite with your brothers,
And grow to a thing you can see!
An organized creature like me!

Said the Amœboid Cell to the Specialized Cell,
But where would my liberty be?
If I'm one with a class,
I should lose in the mass
All my Individualitee!
And that is a horror to me!

Said the Specialized Cell to the Amœboid Cell,
What good does it do you to-day?
You're amorphous and small,
You've no organs at all,
You can't even get out of the way!
You don't half understand what I say!

Said the Amœboid Cell to the Specialized Cell,
But I'm independent and free!
I can float as I please
In these populous seas,
I'm not fastened to anybodee!
I have personal freedom, you see!

And when I want organs and members and such
I project them—an arm or a wing;
I can change as I will,
But you have to keep still—
Just a part of the mass where you cling!
You never can be but one thing!

Said the Specialized Cell to the Amœboid Cell,
What you say is undoubtedly true,
But I'd rather be part
Of a thing with a heart
Than the whole of a creature like you!
A memberless morsel like you!

You say you're immortal and separate and free—
Yet you've died by the billion before;
Just a speck in the slime
At the birthday of time—
And you never can be any more!
As you are you've no future in store!

You say you can be many things in yourself—
Yet you're all just alike to the end!
I am part of a whole—
Of a thing with a soul—
And the whole is the unit, my friend!
But that you can scarce comprehend!

You are only yourself—just a series of ones;
You can only say "I"—never "we";

All of us are combined
In a creature with mind,
And *we* are the creature you see!
And the creature feeds *us*--which is *me*!

And being combined in a body like that
It can wisely provide us with food;
And we vary and change
In a limitless range--
We are specialized now, for our good!
And we each do our work--as we should!

What protection have you from the chances of Fate?
What provision have you for the morrow?
You get food when it drops
And you die when it stops!
You can't give or take, lend or borrow!
You helpless free-agent of sorrow!

Just then came a frost and the Amœboid Cell
Died out by the billion again;
But the Specialized Cell
In the body felt well
And rejoiced in his place in the brain!
The dead level of life with a brain!

THE CART BEFORE THE HORSE.

Our business system has its base
On one small thought that's out of place;
The merest trifle—nothing much, of course—
The truth is there—who says it's not?—
Only—the trouble is—you've got
The cart before the horse!

You say unless a man shall work
Right earnestly, and never shirk,
He may not eat. Now look—the change is small,
And yet the truth is plain to see—
Unless man eats, and frequently,
He cannot work at all!

And which comes first? Why that is plain,
The man comes first. And, look again—
A baby! with an appetite to fit!
You have to feed him years and years,
And train him up with toil and tears,
Before he works a bit!

So let us change our old ideas,
And learn with these advancing years
To give the oats before we ask for speed;
Not set the hungry horse to run,
And tell him when the race is done
That he shall have his feed!

“THE POOR YE HAVE ALWAYS WITH YOU.”

The poor ye have always with you, therefore why
Seek to improve a lot ordained of God—
Dare to rebel beneath his chastening rod—
Question the law on high?

The poor ye have always with you—plain to see
Is this thing so far—stated by our Lord—
Proved by the fact and also by his Word,
So it must surely be!

Yet wait—“have always” is the present tense—
He said they had them always, and they had;
Must we therefore believe a thing so bad
Shall always crush us with its weight immense?

“You always have the headache!” I complain—
’Tis not prediction that you always will,
Nor yet a lasting curse to say, worse still,
That you must always bear that pain.

The poor we have had with us in full store
From senseless age to age. Let man to-day
Rise up and put this human shame away—
Let us have poor no more!

MR. ROCKEFELLER'S PRAYER.

The wealthy Mr. Rockefeller is reported to have said that his income was so much in excess of his means of spending it that he had to kneel down every day and ask for Divine guidance to get rid of it.

By his bedside, bowed in prayer,
Kneeleth the multi-millionaire —
Rockefeller, the millionaire.

He that believeth ! He that prays !
Asking the Lord to show him ways
To spend his gold—to Him the praise !

For it pileth up and it lieth loose —
Surplus gold beyond his use
From the virgin's lamp and the widow's cruse.

“Teach me Lord how I may spend
This gold of mine that hath no end —
Shall I buy ? Buy what ? Shall I give ? Or lend ?”

Answers the Lord of spirit pure
Out of the word that shall endure —
“Sell all thou hast and give the poor !”

But this man that hath lain strong hand
On the people's oil, on the people's land,
Wealth-blinded — can he understand ?

We give him his wealth, whoever we be,
We pay his price in this land of the free,
And he selleth for less across the sea !

They pay less and we pay more,
Helpless all on either shore,
And still upswelleth his mighty store.

It swelleth vast and it weigheth sore,
It rolleth and doubleth o'er and o'er,
And so he prayeth—listen once more!

“Teach me, Lord, what I must do
To spend my gold and pleasure you—
To hold the earth, and heaven too!”

Answers the Lord of pain so free—
The Lord of love and poverty—
“Take up thy cross and follow me!”

While his unspent gold doth vex his head,
While a million children cry for bread,
How shall he hear what the Lord hath said?

In the name of the hungry left unfed,
Or the sick and in prison unvisited,
Listen to what the Lord hath said!

His Heaven is not reached by sin,
The meek and the poor its crown may win,
But the rich shall hardly enter in!

Pray, thou rich man! Pray again!
To the Lord of poverty and pain;
Pray and *do*—his Word is plain!

THE OLD TIME WAIL.

An Associated Press dispatch describes the utterance of a Farmers' Alliance meeting in Kansas as consisting mostly of "the old time wail of distress."

Still Dives hath no peace. Broken his slumber,
His feasts are troubled and his pleasures fail—
For still he hears from voices without number
The same old wail.

They gather yet in field and town and city—
The people—discontented—bitter—pale—
And murmur of oppression, pain, and pity—
The old time wail.

And weary Dives, jaded in his pleasures,
Finding the endless clamor tiresome—stale—
Would gladly give a part of his wide treasures
To quiet that old wail.

Old? Yes, as old as Egypt. Sounding lowly
From naked millions, in the desert hid,
Starving and bleeding while they builded, slowly,
The Pharaohs' pyramid.

As old as Rome. That endless empire's minions
Raised ever and again the same dull cry;
And even Cæsar's eagle bent his pinions
While it disturbed the sky.

As old as the Dark Ages. The lean peasant,
Numerous, patient, still as time went by

Made his lord's pastimes something less than pleasant
With that unceasing cry.

It grew in volume down the crowding ages—
Unheeded still, and unappeased, it swelled.
And now it pleads in vain, and now it rages—
The answer still withheld.

A century ago it shrieked and clamored
Till trembled emperors and kings grew pale;
At gates of palaces it roared and hammered—
The same old wail.

It got no final answer, though its passion
Altered the face of Europe, monarchs slew;
But ere it sank to silence, in some fashion
Others were wailing, too.

And now in broad America we hear it—
From crowded street, from boundless hill and vale.
Hear, Dives! Have ye not some cause to fear it—
This old time wail?

Louder, my brother! Let us wail no longer
Like those past sufferers whose hearts did break—
We are a wiser race, a braver, stronger—
Let us not ask, but take!

So Dives shall have no distress soever,
No sound of anguished voice by land or sea;
The old time wail shall so be stilled forever,
And Dives shall not be!

POOR HUMAN NATURE.

I saw a meager, melancholy cow,
Blessed with a starveling calf that sucked in vain ;
Eftsoon he died. I asked the mother how—?
Quoth she, "Of every four there dieth twain!"
Poor bovine nature!

I saw a sickly horse of shambling gait,
Ugly and wicked, weak in leg and back,
Useless in all ways, in a wretched state—
"We 're all poor creatures!" said the sorry hack.
Poor equine nature!

I saw a slow cat crawling on the ground,
Weak, clumsy, inefficient, full of fears,
The mice escaping from her aimless bound—
Moaned she, "This truly is a vale of tears!"
Poor feline nature!

Then did I glory in my noble race
Healthful and beautiful, alert and strong,
Rejoicing that we held a higher place
And need not add to theirs our mournful song—
Poor human nature!

CHARITY.

Came two young children to their mother's shelf
 (One was quite little, and the other big),
And each in freedom calmly helped himself—
 (One was a pig).

The food was free and plenty for them both,
 But one was rather dull and very small,
So the big smarter brother, nothing loath,
 He took it all.

At which the little fellow raised a yell
 Which tired the other's more esthetic ears—
He gave him here a crust and there a shell
 To stop his tears.

He gave with pride, in manner calm and bland,
 Finding the other's hunger a delight;
He gave with piety—his full left hand
 Hid from his right.

He gave and gave—O blessed Charity!
 How sweet and beautiful a thing it is!
How fine to see that big boy giving free
 What is not his!

DIVISION OF PROPERTY.

Some sailors were starving at sea
On a raft where they happened to be,
 When one of the crew
 Who was hidden from view
Was found to be feasting most free.

Then they cursed him in language profane,
Because there on the pitiless main
 While the others did starve
 He could ladle and carve,
Eating food which they could not obtain.

But, said he, 'tis my own little store!
To feed all of you would take more!
 If I shared 't would be found
 That it would not go round—
And you all would starve on as before!

It would only prolong your distress
To distribute this one little mess!
 The supply is so small
 I had best eat it all—
For me it will comfort and bless!

This reasoning sounded most fair,
But the men had large appetites there,
 And while he explained
 They ate all that remained—
Forgetting to leave out his share!

THE DEAD LEVEL.

There is a fear among us as we strive,
As we succeed or fail, or starve or revel,
That there will be no pleasure left alive
When we in peace and joy at last arrive
At one dead level.

And still the strangest part of this strange fear
Is that it is not for ourselves we fear it.
We wish to rise and gain—we look ahead
To pleasant years of peace ere we are dead—
We wish that peace, but wish no other near it!

Say, does it spoil your pleasure in a town
To have your neighbors' gardens full of roses?
Is your house dearer when its eye looks down
On evil smelling shanties rough and brown—
Is your nose safer than your neighbor's nose is?

Are you unhappy at some noble fete
To see the whole bright throng in radiant dresses?
Is your State safer when each other State
That borders it is full of want and hate?
Peace must be peace to all before it blesses.

Is knowledge sweeter when it is penned in
By ignorance that does not know its master?
Is goodness easier when plenteous sin
Surrounds it? And can you not win
Joy for yourself without your friend's disaster?

O foolish children ! With more foolish fear —
Unworthy even of a well-trained devil !
Good things are good for all men — that is clear —
To doubt it shows your heads are nowhere near
To that much-dreaded level !

THE LOOKER ON.

The world was full of the battle,
The whole world far and wide —
Men and women and children
Were fighting on either side.

I was sent from the hottest combat
With a message of life and death,
Black with smoke and red with blood,
Weary and out of breath,

When I found a cheerful stranger,
Calm, critical, serene,
Well sheltered from all danger —
Painting a battle scene.

He was cordially glad to see me —
The coolly smiling wretch —
And inquired with admiration,
“Do you mind if I make a sketch ?”

So he had me down in a minute,
With murmurs of real delight ;
My "color" was "delicious,"
My "action" was "just right!"

And he prattled on with ardor
Of the moving scene below—
Of the "values" of the smoke-wreaths
And "the splendid rush and go"

Of the headlong desperate charges
Where a thousand lives were spent—
Of the "massing" in the foreground
With the "middle distance" blent.

Said I, "You speak serenely
Of the living death in view—
These are human creatures dying—
Are you not human too?"

"This is a present battle,
Where all men strive to-day—
How does it chance you sit apart?
Which is your banner—say!"

His fresh cheek blanched a little,
But he answered with a smile
That he fought not on either side—
He was watching a little while.

"Watching!" said I—"and neutral!
Neutral in times like these!"

And I plucked him off his sketching stool
And brought him to his knees.

I stripped him of his traveling cloak
And showed him to the sky—
By his uniform—a traitor!
By his handiwork—a spy!

I dragged him back to the field he left—
To the fate he was fitted for—
We have no place for lookers on
When all the world's at war!

FREE LAND IS NOT ENOUGH.

Free land is not enough. In earliest days
When man, the baby, from the earth's bare breast
Drew for himself his simple sustenance,
Then freedom and his effort were enough.
The world to which a man is born to-day
Is a constructed, human, man-built world.
As the first savage needed the free wood,
We need the road, the ship, the bridge, the house,
The government, society, and church—
These are the basis of our life to-day—
As much necessities to modern man
As was the forest to his ancestor.
To say to the new-born, "Take here your land;

In primal freedom settle where you will,
And work your own salvation in the world,"
Is but to put the last come upon earth
Back with dim forerunners of his race
To climb the race's stairway in one life!
Allied society owes to the young—
The new men come to carry on the world—
Account for all the past, the deeds, the keys,
Full access to the riches of the earth.
Why? That these new ones may not be compelled,
Each for himself, to do our work again—
But reach their manhood even with to-day,
And gain to-morrow sooner. To go on—
To start from where we are and go ahead—
That is true progress, true humanity!

WASTE.

Doth any man consider what we waste?
Here in God's garden? While the sea is full,
The sunlight smiles, and all the blessed earth
Offers her wealth to our intelligence.
We waste our food, enough for half the world,
In helpless luxury among the rich,
In helpless ignorance among the poor,
In spilling what we stop to quarrel for.
We waste our wealth in failing to produce,

In robbing of each other every day
In place of making things—our human crown.
We waste our strength, in endless effort poured
Like water on the sand, still toiling on
To make a million things we do not want.
We waste our lives, those which should still lead on,
Each new one gaining on the age behind,
In doing what we all have done before.
We waste our love—poured up into the sky,
Across the ocean, into desert lands,
Sunk in one narrow circle next ourselves—
While these, our brothers, suffer—are alone.
Ye may not pass the near to love the far;
Ye may not love the near and stop at that;
Love spreads through man, not over or around!
Yea, grievously we waste, and all the time
Humanity is wanting—wanting sore.
Waste not my brothers, and ye shall not want!

NATIONALISM.

The nation is a unit. That which makes
You an American of our to-day
Requires the nation and its history,
Requires the sum of all our citizens,
Requires the product of our common toil,
Requires the freedom of our common laws,

The common heart of our humanity.
Decrease our population, check our growth,
Deprive us of our wealth, our liberty,
Lower the nation's conscience by a hair,
And you are less than that you were before!
You stand here in the world the man you are
Because your country is America.
Our liberty belongs to each of us;
The nation guarantees it; in return
We serve the nation, serving so ourselves.
Our education is a common right;
The state provides it, equally to all,
Each taking what he can, and in return
We serve the state, so serving best ourselves.
Food, clothing, all necessities of life—
These are a right as much as liberty!
The nation feeds its children. In return
We serve the nation, serving still ourselves—
Nay, not ourselves—ourselves! We are but parts,
The unit is the state—America.

.

OTHER POEMS.

SONGS OF SAN FRANCISCO.

THE SATIRIST.

OTHER POEMS.

BALLAD OF THE SUMMER SUN.

It is said that human nature needeth hardship to
 be strong,
That highest growth has come to man in countries
 white with snow,
And they tell of truth and wisdom that to north-
 ern folk belong,
And claim the brain is feeble where the south
 winds always blow.
They forget to read the story of the ages long ago—
The lore that built the pyramids where still the
 simoom veers,
The knowledge framing Tyrian ships, the greater
 skill that steers,
The learning of the Hindu in his volumes never
 done,

All the wisdom of Egyptians and the old Chal-
dean seers —
Came to man in summer lands beneath a summer
sun.

It is said that human nature needeth hardship to
be strong,
That courage bred of meeting cold makes martial
bosoms glow,
And they point to mighty generals the northern
folk among,
And call mankind emasculate where southern waters
flow.
They forget to look at history and see the nations
grow !
The cohorts of Assyrian kings, the Pharaohs' char-
ioteers,
The march of Alexander, the Persians' conquering
spears,
The legions of the Romans, from Ethiop to Hun,
The power that mastered all the world and held
it years on years —
Came to man in summer lands beneath a summer
sun.

It is said that human nature needeth hardship to
be strong,
That only pain and suffering the power to feel
bestow,

And they show us noble artists made great by loss
and wrong,
And say the soul is lowered that hath pleasure
without woe.
They forget the perfect monuments that pleasure's
blessings show,
The statue and the temple that no man living
nears,
Song and verse and music forever in the ears,
The glory that remaineth while the sands of time
shall run,
The beauty of immortal art that never disappears—
Came to man in summer lands beneath a summer
sun.

The faith of Thor and Odin, the creed of force
and fears,
Cruel gods that deal in death, the icebound soul
reveres,
But the Lord of Peace and Blessing was not one!
Truth and Power and Beauty—Love that endeth
tears—
Came to man in summer lands beneath a summer
sun.

WINGS.

A sense of wings —
Soft downy wings and fair —
Great wings that whistle as they sweep
Along the still gulfs — empty — deep —
Of thin blue air.

Doves' wings that follow —
Doves' wings that fold —
Doves' wings that flutter down
To nestle in your hold.

Doves' wings that settle —
Doves' wings that rest —
Doves' wings that brood so warm
Above the little nest.

Larks' wings that rise and rise,
Climbing the rosy skies —
Fold and drop down
To birdlings brown.

Light wings of wood-birds, that one scarce believes
Moved in the leaves.

The quick shy flight
Of wings that flee in fright —
A start as swift as light —
Only the shaken air
To tell that wings were there.

Broad wings that beat for many days
Above the land wastes and the water ways ;
 Beating steadily on and on,
 Through dark and cold,
 Through storms untold,
Till the far sun and summer land is won.

And wings —

 Wings that unfold
With such wide sweep before your would-be hold—
Such glittering sweep of whiteness—sun on snow—
Such mighty plumes—strong-ribbed, strong-webbed
 —strong-knit to go
 From earth to heaven — !
 Hear the air flow back
 In their wide track !
Feel the sweet wind these wings displace
 Beat on your face !
See the great arc of light like rising rockets trail
 They leave in leaving —
 They avail —
 These wings — for flight !

COMPROMISE.

It is well to fight and win --
 If that may be ;
It is well to fight and die therein --
 For such go free ;

It is ill to fight and find no grave

But a prison-cell—

To keep alive, yet live a slave—

Praise those who fell!

But worst of all are those who stand

With arms laid by,

Bannerless, helpless, no command,

No battle-cry.

They live to save unvalued breath,

With lowered eyes;

In place of victory, or death—

A compromise!

AS FLEW THE CROSS.

As flew the fiery cross from hand to hand,

Kindling the scattered people to one flame,

Out-blazing fiercely to a sudden war;

As beacon fires flamed up from hill to hill,

Crying afar to valleys hidden wide

To tell their many dwellers of a fear

That made them one—a danger shadowing all!—

So flies to-day the torch of living fire,

From mouth to mouth, from distant ear to ear;

And all the people of all nations hear;

The printed word, the living word that tells

Of the great glory of the coming day—

The joy that makes us one forevermore!

SERVICES.

She was dead. Forth went the word,
And every creature heard.
To the last hamlet in the farthest lands,
To people countless as the sands
Of primal seas.
And with the word so sent
Her life's full record went—
Of what fair line, how gifted, how endowed,
How educated; and then, told aloud,
The splendid tale of what her life had done.
And all the people heard and felt as one,
Exulting all together in their dead
And the grand story of the life she led.

But in the city where her body lay
Great services were held on that fair day.
People by thousands. Music to the sky.
Flowers of a garnered season. Winding by,
Processions, glorious in rich array,
All massing in the temple where she lay.

Then, when the music rested, rose and stood
Those who could speak of her and count the good,
The measureless great good her life had spread,
That all might hear the praises of their dead.
And those who loved her sent from the world's end
Their tribute to the memory of their friend;

While teachers to their children whispered low,
"See that you have as many when you go!"

Then was recited how her life had part
In building up this science and that art,
Inventing here, administering there,
Helping to organize, create, prepare,
With fullest figures to expatiate
On her unmeasured value to the state.
And the child, listening, grew in noble pride,
And planned for greater praises when he died.

Then the Poet spoke of those long ripening years,
And tenderer music brought the grateful tears;
And then, lest grief upon their heartstrings hang,
Her children stood around the bier and sang:

In the name of the mother that bore us—
 Bore us strong—bore us free—
We will strive in the labors before us,
 Even as she! Even as she!

In the name of her wisdom and beauty,
 Of her life full of light,
We will live in our national duty,
 We will help on the right;

We will love as her heart loved before us,
 Warm and wide—strong and high!
In the name of the mother that bore us,
 We will live! We will die!

SEEKING.

I went to look for Love among the roses, the roses,
The pretty winged boy with the arrow and the bow,
 In the fair and fragrant places,
 'Mongst the Muses and the Graces,
At the feet of Aphrodite, with the roses all aglow.

Then I sought among the shrines where the rosy
 flames were leaping—
The rose and golden flames, never ceasing, never
 still—

 For the boy so fair and slender,
 The imperious, the tender,
With the whole world moving slowly to the music
 of his will.

Sought, and found not for my seeking, till the sweet
 quest led me further,
And before me rose the temple, marble-based and
 gold above,
 Where the long procession marches
 'Neath the incense-clouded arches
In the world-compelling worship of the mighty
 God of Love.

Yea I passed with bated breath to the holiest of
 holies,
And I lifted the great curtain from the Inmost—
 the Most Fair—

Eager for the joy of finding—
For the glory, beating, blinding—
Meeting but an empty darkness—darkness—silence
—nothing there.

Where is Love? I cried in anguish, while the
temple reeled and faded—
Where is Love?—for I must find him, I must
know and understand!
Died the music and the laughter,
Flames and music dying after,
And the curtain I was holding fell to ashes in my
hand.

FINDING.

Out of great darkness and wide wastes of silence,
Long loneliness, and slow untasted years,
Came a slow filling of the empty places,
A slow sweet lighting of forgotten faces,
A smiling under tears.

A light of dawn that filled the brooding heaven,
A warmth that kindled all the earth and air,
A thrilling tender music, floating, stealing,
A fragrance of unnumbered flowers revealing
A sweetness new and fair.

After the loss of love where I had sought him,
After the anguish of the empty shrine,
Came a warm joy from all the hearts around me,
A feeling that some perfect strength had found me,
Touch of the hand divine.

I followed Love to his intensest center,
And lost him utterly when fastened there,
I let him go and ceased my selfish seeking,
Turning my heart to all earth's voices speaking,
And found him everywhere.

Love like the rain that falls on just and unjust,
Love like the sunshine, measureless and free,
From each to all, from all to each, to live in;
And, in the world's glad love so gladly given,
Came heart's true love to me!

NEW DUTY.

Once to God we owed it all—
God alone;
Bowing in eternal thrall—
Giving, sacrificing all—
Before the Throne.

Once we owed it to the King—
Served the crown;
Life, and love, and everything,
In allegiance to the King,
Laying down.

Now we owe it to Mankind —
 To our Race ;
Fullest fruit of soul and mind,
Heart and hand and all behind,
 Now in place.

Loving-service, wide and free,
 From the sod
Up in varying degree
Through me and you—through you and me—
 Up to God !

RUINED.

I am ruined ! sobbed the seed,
 As it fell, by free winds shaken ;
For the earth was dark indeed,
 All the light and heat were taken,
All the birds' songs and leaves' laughter —
Only silence followed after —
 Cold and darkness were its meed.

I am ruined ! cried the rock
 As it fell in fragments scattered,
For its strength went with the shock.
 All its use on earth was shattered ;
All its grandeur and stern beauty,
All its forest-bearing duty —
 Lost in many a shapeless block.

I am ruined ! wept the woman
 As she fell by Love's beguiling,
 For her fate was fierce, inhuman ;
 All hope vanished, sadly smiling,
 All the chance of reinstatement,
 Only shame without abatement,
 Endless shame for fallen woman.

After seedtime came the sun,
 And warm rains of spring caressing,
 Till the seed that was but one
 Grew into a tree of blessing,
 Feeding, shading, emerald-suited,
 Rosy-blossomed, golden-fruited —
 Joy of all it shone upon.

The torn rock lay far and wide,
 Hammered sore and carved and hollowed,
 Till a temple rose beside,
 And fair palaces that followed.
 Power and beauty crowned the portals,
 Shelter to a race of mortals —
 Long the rock was glorified.

And the woman ? She rose brave,
 Learned new wisdom from old sorrow,
 Wide that costly wisdom gave
 For all helpless ones to borrow —
 Purer for the fiery trial,
 Stronger for the long denial,
 Soul re-made to help and save.

MOTHERHOOD.

Motherhood: First mere laying of an egg,
With blind foreseeing of the wisest place,
And blind provision of the proper food
For unseen larva to grow grow fat upon
After the instinct-guided mother died—
Posthumous motherhood, no love, no joy.

Motherhood: Brooding patient o'er the nest,
With gentle stirring of an unknown love;
Defending eggs unhatched, feeding the young
For days of callow feebleness, and then
Driving the fledglings from the nest to fly.

Motherhood: When the kitten and the cub
Cried out alive, and first the mother knew
The fumbling of furry little paws,
The pressure of the hungry little mouths
Against the more than ready mother-breast—
The love that comes of giving and of care.

Motherhood: Nursing with her heart-warm milk,
Fighting to death all danger to her young,
Hunting for food for little ones half-weaned,
Teaching them how to hunt and fight in turn—
Then loving not till the new litter came.

Motherhood: When the little savage grew
Tall at his mother's side, and learned to feel

Some mother even in his father's heart.
Love coming to new babies while the first
Still needed mother's care, and therefore love—
Love lasting longer because childhood did.

Motherhood : Semi-civilized, intense,
Fierce with brute passion, narrow with the range
Of slavish lives to meanest service bowed ;
Devoted—to the sacrifice of life ;
Jealous beyond belief, and ignorant
Even of what should keep the child alive.
Love spreading with the spread of human needs,
The child's new, changing, ever-growing wants,
Yet seeking like brute mothers of the past
To give all things to her own child herself.
Loving to the exclusion of all else ;
To the child's service bending a whole life ;
Yet stunting the young creature day by day
With lack of Justice, Liberty, and Peace.

Motherhood : Civilized. There stands at last
Facing the heavens with as calm a smile,
The highest fruit of the long work of God ;
The highest type of this, the highest race ;
She from whose groping instinct grew all love—
All love—in which is all the life of man.

Motherhood : Seeing with her clear kind eyes,
Luminous, tender eyes, wherein the smile
Is like the smile of sunlight on the sea,

That the new children of the newer day
Need more than any single heart can give,
More than is known to any single mind,
More than is found in any single house,
And need it from the day they see the light.
Then, measuring her love by what they need,
Gives, from the heart of modern motherhood.
Gives first, as tree to bear God's highest fruit,
A clean strong body, perfect and full grown,
Fair for the purpose of its womanhood,
Not for light fancy of a lower mind;
Gives a clear mind, athletic, beautiful,
Dispassionate, unswerving from the truth;
Gives a great heart that throbs with human love,
As she would wish her son to love the world.

Then, when the child comes, lovely as a star,
She, in the peace of primal motherhood,
Nurses her baby with unceasing joy,
With milk of human kindness, human health,
Bright human beauty, and immortal love.
And then? Ah! here is the New Motherhood—
The motherhood of the fair new-made world—
O glorious New Mother of New Men!
Her child, with other children from its birth,
In the unstinted freedom of warm air,
Under the wisest eyes, the tenderest thought,
Surrounded by all beauty and all peace,
Led, playing, through the gardens of the world,

With the crowned heads of science and great love
Mapping safe paths for those small rosy feet —
Taught human love by feeling human love,
Taught justice by the laws that rule his days,
Taught wisdom by the way in which he lives,
Taught to love all mankind and serve them fair
By seeing, from his birth, all children served
With the same righteous, all-embracing care.

O Mother! Noble Mother, yet to come!
How shall thy child point to the bright career
Of her of whom he boasts to be the son —
Not for assiduous service spent on him,
But for the wisdom which has set him forth
A clear-brained, pure-souled, noble-hearted man,
With health and strength and beauty for his own.
And, more, for the wide record of her life,
Great work, well done, that makes him praise her
name

And long to make as great a one his own!
And how shall all the children of the world,
Feeling all mothers love them, loving all,
Rise up and call her blessed!

This shall be.

THE LOST GAME.

Came the big children to the little ones,
And unto them full pleasantly did say,
“Lo! we have spread for you a merry game,
And ye shall all be winners at the same—
Come now and play!”

*Great is the game they enter in—
Rouge et Noir on a giant scale—
Red with blood and black with sin,
Where many must lose and few may win,
And the players never fail!*

Said the strong children to the weaker ones,
“See, ye are many, and we are but few!
The mass of all the counters ye divide,
But few remain to share upon our side—
Play—as we do!”

*Strange is the game they enter in—
Rouge et Noir on a field of pain!
And the silver white and the yellow gold
Pile and pile in the victor's hold,
While the many play in vain!*

Said the weak children to the stronger ones,
“See now, howe'er it fall, we lose our share!
And play we well or ill we always lose—
While ye gain always, more than ye can use—
Bethink ye—is it fair?”

*Strange is the game they enter in —
Rouge et Noir, and the bank is strong !
Play they well or play they wide
The gold is still on the banker's side,
And the game endureth long.*

Said the strong children, each aside to each,
“The game is slow — our gains are all too small !
Play we together now, 'gainst them apart —
So shall these dull ones lose it from the start,
And we shall gain it all !”

*Strange is the game that now they win —
Rouge et Noir with a new design !
What can the many players do
Whose wits are weak and counters few
When the Power and the Gold combine ?*

Said the weak children to the stronger ones,
“We care not for the game !
For play as we may our chance is small,
And play as ye may ye have it all —
The end's the same !”

*Strange is the game the world doth play ;
Rouge et Noir, with the counters gold,
Red with blood and black with sin ;
Few and fewer are they that win
As the ages pass untold.*

Said the strong children to the weaker ones,
“Ye lose in laziness ! ye lose in sleep !

Play faster now and make the counters spin!
Play well, as we, and ye in time shall win!
Play fast! Play deep!"

*Strange is the game of Rouge et Noir—
Never a point have the little ones won—
The winners are strong and flushed with gain,
The losers are weak with want and pain,
And still the game goes on.*

But those rich players grew so very few,
So many grew the poor ones, that one day
They rose up from that table, side by side,
Calm, countless, terrible—they rose and cried
In one great voice that shook the heavens wide,
"WE WILL NOT PLAY!"

*Where is the game of Rouge et Noir?
Where is the wealth of yesterday?
What availeth the power ye tell,
And the skill in the game ye play so well,
If the players will not play?*

WHO IS TO BLAME?

Who was to blame in that old time
Of the unnoticed groan,
When prisoners without proof of crime
Rotted in dungeons wet with slime,
And died unknown?

When torture was a common thing,
When fire could speak,
When the flayed wretch hung quivering,
And rack-strained tendons, string by string,
Snapped with a shriek ?

Is it the Headsman, following still
The laws his masters give ?
Is it the Church or King who kill ?
Or just the People, by whose will
Church, King, and Headsman live ?

The People, bowing slavish knee
With tribute fruits of earth ;
The People, gathering to see
The stake, the axe, the gallows-tree,
In brutal mirth !

The People, countenancing pain
By willing presence there ;
The People—you might shriek in vain,
Poor son of Abel or of Cain—
The People did not care !

And now, in this fair age we're in,
Who is to blame ?
When men go mad and women sin
Because the life they struggle in
Enforces shame !

When torture is so deep, so wide—
The kind we give—
So long drawn out, so well supplied,
That men die now by suicide,
Rather than live!

Is it the Rich Man, grinding still
The faces of the poor?
Is it our System which must kill?
Or just the People, by whose will
That system can endure?

The People, bowing slavish knee
With tribute fruits of earth;
The People, who can bear to see
In crime and death and poverty
Fair ground for mirth!

The People, countenancing pain
By willing presence there;
The People—you may shriek in vain—
Protest, rebel, beseech, complain—
The People do not care!

Each man and woman feels the weight
Of their own private share;
But for the suffering of the state,
That falls on all men soon or late,
The People do not care!

OUT OF PLACE.

Cell — poor little cell,
Distended with pain,
Torn with the pressure
Of currents of effort
Resisted in vain,
Feeling sweep by you
The stream of nutrition,
Unable to take,
Crushed flat and inactive —
While shudder across you
Great forces that wake.
Alone — while far voices
Across all the shouting
Call you to your own —
Held fast — fastened close —
Surrounded — enveloped —
How you starve there alone!
Cell — poor little cell! —
Let the pain pass — don't hold it —
Let the effort pass through you —
Let go! And give way! —
You will find your own place;
You will join your own people;
See the light of your day!

OUT OF THE GATE.

Out of the glorious city gate
A great throng came.
A mighty throng that swelled and grew
Around a face that all men knew—
A man who bore a noted name—
Gathered to listen to his fate.

The Judge sat high. Unbroken black
Around, above, and at his back.
The people pressed for nearer place,
Longing, yet shamed, to watch that face;
And in a space before the throne
The prisoner stood, unbound, alone.
So thick they rose on every side
There was no spot his face to hide.

Then came the Herald, crying clear,
That all the listening crowd should hear;
Crying aloud before the sun
What thing this fallen man had done.
He—who had held a ruler's place
Among them, by their choice and grace—
He—fallen lower than the dust—
Had sinned against his public trust!

The Herald ceased. The Poet arose,
The Poet, whose awful art now shows

To this poor heart, and heart of every one,
The horror of the thing that he had done.

“O Citizen! Dweller in this high place!
Son of the city! Sharer in its pride!
Born in the light of its fair face!
By it fed, sheltered, taught, and glorified!
Raised to pure manhood by thy city’s care!
Made strong and beautiful and happy there;
Loving thy mother and thy father more
For the fair town which made them glad before;
Finding among its maidens thy sweet wife;
Owing to it thy power and place in life;
Raised by its people to the lofty stand
Where thou couldst execute their high command;
Trusted and honored, lifted over all—
So honored and so trusted didst thou fall!
Against the people—who gave thee the power—
Thou hast misused it in an evil hour!
Against the city where thou owest all—
Thy city, man, within whose guarding wall
Thy life hath found a wise and loving care,
All good things plentifully given there—
Against thy city, beautiful and strong,
Thou, with the power it gave, hast done this
wrong!”

Then rose the Judge. “Prisoner, thy case was tried
Fairly and fully in the courts inside.
Thy guilt was proven and thou hast confessed,

And now the people's voice must do the rest.
I speak the sentence which the people give—
It is permitted thee to freely live,
Redeem thy sin by service to the state,
But nevermore within this city's gate!"

Back rolled the long procession, sad and slow,
Back where the city's thousand banners blow.
The solemn music rises glad and clear
When the great gates before them open near,
Rises in triumph, sinks to sweet repose,
When the great gates behind them swing and close.
Free stands the prisoner, with a heart of stone.
The city gate is shut. He is alone.

LIMITS.

On sand—loose sand and shifting—
On sand—dry sand and drifting—
 The city grows to the west;
Not till its border reaches
The ocean-beaten beaches
 Will it rest.

On hills—steep hills and lonely,
That stop at cloudland only—
 The city climbs to the sky;
Not till the souls who make it
Touch the clear light and take it,
 Will it die.

AN ECONOMIST.

The serene savage sitting in his tree
Saw empires rise and fall,
And moralized on their uncertainty —
(He never rose at all!)

He was full fat from god-sent droves of prey;
He was full calm from satisfied desire;
He was full wise in that he chose to stay
Free from ambition's fire.

"See," quoth the savage, "how they toil and strive
To make things better—vain and idle wish!
Here is good store of what keeps man alive,
Of fruit, and flesh, and fish.

"Poor discontented wretches, fed on air,
Seeking to change the normal lot of man,
To lure him from this natural strife and care,
With vague utopian plan!

"Here's wealth and joy—why seek for any
change?

Why labor for a more elaborate life?
As if God could not his own world arrange
Without our fretful strife!

"Those who complain of savagery as low
Are merely proven lazy and too weak

To live by skillful hunt and deadly blow --
It is their needs that speak.

“Complain of warfare! Cry that peace is sweet!
Complain of hunting! Prate of toil and trade!
It only proves that they cannot compete
In the free life we’ve made.”

Another empire reeled into its grave;
The savage sat serenely as before,
As calm and wise, as cunning and as brave --
Never an atom more.

THE PIG AND THE PEARL.

Said the Pig to the Pearl, “Oh, fie!
Tasteless—and hard—and dry—
Get out of my sty!
Glittering, smooth, and clean,
You only seek to be seen!
I am dirty and big!
A virtuous, valuable pig.
For me all things are sweet
That I can possibly eat;
But you—how can you be good
Without being fit for food?
Not even food for me—
Who can eat all this you see,

No matter how foul and sour ;
I revel from hour to hour
In refuse of great and small,
But you are no good at all,
And if I should gulp you, quick,
It would probably make me sick !”
Said the Pig to the Pearl, “ Oh, fie !”
And she rooted her out of the sty.

A Philosopher chancing to pass
Saw the Pearl in the grass ;
And laid hands on the same in a trice,
For the Pearl was a Pearl of Great Price.
Said he, “ Madame Pig, if you knew
What a fool thing you do,
It would grieve even you !
Grant that pearls are not just to your taste,
Must you let them run waste ?
You care only for hogwash, I know,
For your litter and you. Even so,
This tasteless hard thing which you scorn
Would buy acres of corn ;
And apples and pumpkins, and pease,
By the ton, if you please !
By the wealth which this pearl represents,
You could grow so immense—
You, and every last one of your young—
That your fame would be sung
As the takers of every first prize,

For your flavor and size!
From even a Pig's point of view
The Pearl was worth millions to you.
Be a Pig—and a fool—(you must be them)
But try to know Pearls when you see them!"

A MISFIT.

O Lord, take me out of this!

I do not fit!

My body does not suit my mind,
My brain is weak in the knees and blind,
My clothes are not what I want to find—
Not one bit!

My house is not the house I like—

Not one bit!

My church is built so loose and thin
That ten fall out where one falls in—
My creed is buttoned with a pin—
It does not fit!

The school I went to was n't right—

Not one bit!

The education given me
Was meant for the community,
And my poor head works differently—
It does not fit!

I try to move and find I can't--

Not one bit!

Things that were given me to stay

Are mostly lost and blown away,

And what I have to use to-day—

It does not fit!

What I was taught I cannot do—

Not one bit!

And what I do I was not taught—

And what I find I have not sought—

I never say the thing I ought—

It does not fit!

I have not meant to be like this—

Not one bit!

But in the puzzle and the strife

I fail my friend and pain my wife—

Oh, how it hurts to have a life

That does not fit!

THE KEEPER OF THE LIGHT.

A lighthouse keeper with a loving heart

Toiled at his service in the lonely tower,

Keeping his giant lenses clear and bright,

And feeding with pure oil the precious light

Whose power to save was as his own heart's power.

He loved his kind, and being set alone

To help them by the means of this great light,
He poured his whole heart's service into it,
And sent his love down the long beams that lit
The waste of broken water in the night.

He loved his kind, and joyed to see the ships

Come out of nowhere into his bright field,
And glide by safely with their living men,
Past him and out into the dark again,
To other hands their freight of joy to yield.

His work was noble and his work was done ;

He kept the ships in safety and was glad ;
And yet, late coming with the light's supplies,
They found the love no longer in his eyes —
The keeper of the light had fallen mad.

IT IS GOOD TO BE ALIVE.

It is good to be alive when the trees shine green,
And the steep red hills stand up against the sky ;
Big sky, blue sky, with flying clouds between —
It is good to be alive and see the clouds drive by !

It is good to be alive when the strong winds blow,
The strong sweet winds blowing straightly off the sea ;
Great sea, green sea, with swinging ebb and flow —
It is good to be alive and see the waves roll free !

CHRISTMAS HYMN.

Listen not to the word that would have you believe
That the voice of the age is a moan—
 That the red hand of wrong
 Is triumphant and strong,
And that wrong is triumphant alone—
There was never a time on the face of the earth
 When love was so near its own.

Do you think that the love which has died for the
 world
Has not lived for the world also?
 Filling man with the fire
 Of a boundless desire
To love all with a love that shall grow?
It was not for nothing the White Christ was born
 Two thousand years ago.

The power that gave birth to the Son of the King
All life doth move and thrill,
 Every age as 't is passed
 Coming nearer at last
To the law of that wonderful will—
As our God so loved the world that day,
 Our God so loves it still.

The love that fed poverty, making it thrive,
Is learning a lovelier way.

We have seen that the poor
Need be with us no more,
And that sin may be driven away—
The love that has carried the martyrs to death
Is entering life to-day.

The spirit of Christ is awake and alive,
In the work of the world it is shown—
Crying loud, crying clear,
That the Kingdom is here,
And that all men are heirs to the throne!
There was never a time since the making of man
When love was so near its own!

THANKSGIVING.

Well is it for the land whose people, yearly,
Turn to the Giver of all Good with praise,
Chanting glad hymns that thank him, loudly, clearly,
Rejoicing in the beauty of his ways.

Great name that means all perfectness and power!
We thank thee—not for mercy, nor release,
But for clear joy in sky and sea and flower,
In thy pure justice, and thy blessed peace.

We live; behind us the dark past; before,
A wide way full of light that thou dost give;
More light, more strength, more joy, and evermore—
O God of joy! we thank thee that we live!

MORNING.

Think not of the morning as coming and going,
 Growing out of the dark,
 Growing into the day—
While your place in the circle is lit by the glowing
 Which cometh and passeth away.

But see the green circle still turning and turning,
 While the sun never faileth
 Wherever earth flies;
The light poureth steady—the earth turneth ready—
 And the glory of morning on earth never dies.

Like the crest of a wave combing white o'er green
 hollows,
 Sweeps the crest of the morning
 Around the green world,
And dawn - music rolls up in the path that it follows
 With bright flowers unfolded and light wings
 unfurled.

THE WOLF AT THE DOOR.

There's a haunting horror near us
That nothing drives away —
Fierce lamping eyes at nightfall,
A crouching shade by day;
There's a whining at the threshold,
There's a scratching at the floor—
To work! To work! In Heaven's name!
The wolf is at the door!

The day was long, the night was short,
The bed was hard and cold,
Still weary are the little ones,
Still weary are the old:
We are weary in our cradles
From our mother's toil untold;
We are born to hoarded weariness
As some to hoarded gold.

We will not rise! We will not work!
Nothing the day can give
Is half so sweet as an hour of sleep;
Better to sleep than live!
What power can stir these heavy limbs?
What hope these dull hearts swell?
What fear more cold, what pain more sharp,
Than the life we know so well?

To die like a man by lead or steel
Is nothing that we should fear:
No human death would be worse to feel
Than the life that holds us here:
But this is a fear no heart can face—
A fate no man can dare—
To be run to earth and die by the teeth
Of the gnawing monster there!

The slow relentless padding step
That never goes astray—
The rustle in the underbrush—
The shadow in the way—
The straining flight—the long pursuit—
The steady gain behind—
Death-wearied man and tireless brute,
And the struggle wild and blind!

There's a hot breath at the keyhole
And a tearing as of teeth!
Well do I know the bloodshot eyes
And the dripping jaws beneath!
There's a whining at the threshold—
There's a scratching at the floor—
To work! To work! In Heaven's name!
The wolf is at the door!

THE LIVING GOD.

The Living God. The God that made the world.
Made it and stood aside to watch and wait.
Arranging a predestined plan
To save the erring soul of man—
Undying destiny—unswerving fate—
I see his hand in the path of life,
His law to doom and save,
His love divine in the hopes that shine
Beyond the sinner's grave,
His care that sendeth sun and rain,
His wisdom giving rest,
His price of sin that we may not win
The heaven of the blest.

Not near enough! Not clear enough!
O God, come nearer still!
I long for thee! Be strong for me!
Teach me to know thy will!

The Living God. The God that makes the world,
Makes it—is making it in all its worth;
His spirit speaking sure and slow
In the real universe we know—
God living in the earth.
I feel his breath in the blowing wind,
His pulse in the swinging sea,
And the sunlit sod is the breast of God

Whose strength we feel and see.
His tenderness in the springing grass,
His beauty in the flowers,
His living love in the sun above—
All here, and near, and ours!

Not near enough! Not clear enough!
O God, come nearer still!
I long for thee! Be strong for me!
Teach me to know thy will!

The Living God. The God that is the world.
The world? The world is man—the work of man.
Then—dare I follow what I see?—
Then—By Thy Glory—it must be
That we are in thy plan!
That strength divine in the work we do—
That love in our mothers' eyes—
That wisdom clear in our thinking here—
That power to help us rise—
God in the daily work we've done,
In the daily path we've trod—
Stand still my heart for I am a part—
I too--of the Living God!

Ah, clear as light! As near! As bright!
O God! My God! My Own!
Command thou me! I stand for thee!
And I do not stand alone!

MY CYCLAMEN.

A little dull brown bulb from somewhere,
And out of its heart,
For days and months together,
With never a thought for time or weather,
The white buds start.

Great green lovely leaves surround it,
Shaped like a heart,
Large green leaves with purple under,
And when they fall—the living wonder!—
Fair new ones start.

No matter now for air or sunlight,
Alone it lives.
Once 't was fed with a flower's full blessing,
And from that memory caressing
It gives and gives!

Crowding up in their generous beauty
The white buds start;
Once made rich with the joy of living—
Now it has more in giving and giving
Out of its heart.

BIRTH.

Lord, I am born !
I have built me a body
Whose ways are all open,
Whose currents run free,
From the life that is thine
Flowing ever within me,
To the life that is mine
Flowing outward through me.

I am clothed, and my raiment
Fits smooth to the spirit,
The soul moves unhindered,
The body is free;
And the thought that my body
Falls short of expressing
In texture and color
Unfoldeth on me.

I am housed, O my Father !
My body is sheltered,
My spirit has room
'Twixt the whole world and me,
I am guarded with beauty and strength,
And within it
Is room for still union,
And birth floweth free.

And the union and birth
Of the house ever growing
Have built me a city—
Have born me a state—
Where I live manifold,
Many-voiced, many-hearted,
Never dead, never weary,
And oh! never parted!
The life of The Human,
So subtle—so great!

Lord, I am born!
From inmost to outmost
The ways are all open—
The currents run free—
From thy voice in my soul
To my joy in the people—
I thank thee, O God,
For this body thou gavest,
Which enfoldeth the earth—
Is enfolded by thee!

SONGS OF SAN FRANCISCO.

THE HILLS.

The flowing waves of our warm sea
Roll to the beach and die,
But the soul of the waves forever fills
The curving crests of our restless hills
That climb so wantonly.

Up and up till you look to see
Along the cloud-kissed top
The great hill-breakers curve and comb
In crumbling lines of falling foam
Before they settle and drop.

Down and down with the shuddering sweep
Of the sea-wave's glassy wall,
You sink with a plunge that takes your breath,
A thrill that stirreth and quickeneth,
Like the great line steamer's fall.

NOTE.—"Songs of San Francisco" and "The Satirist" poems were first published in *The Impress*, of San Francisco.

We have laid our streets by the square and line,
We have built by the line and square,
But the strong hill-rises arch below
And force the houses to curve and flow
In lines of beauty there.

And off to the north and east and south,
With wildering mists between,
They ring us round with wavering hold,
With fold on fold of rose and gold,
Violet, azure, and green.

CITY'S BEAUTY.

Fair, oh, fair are the hills uncrowned,
Only wreathed and garlanded
With the soft clouds overhead,
With the waving streams of rain;
Fair in golden sunlight drowned,
Bathed and buried in the bright
Warm luxuriance of light—
Fair the hills without a stain.

Fairer far the hills should stand
Crowned with a city's halls,
With the glimmer of white walls,
With the climbing grace of towers;
Fair with great fronts tall and grand,

Stately streets that meet the sky,
Lovely roof-lines, low and high—
Fairer for the days and hours.

Woman's beauty fades and flies,
In the passing of the years,
With the falling of the tears,
With the lines of toil and stress;
City's beauty never dies—
Never while her people know
How to love and honor so
Her immortal loveliness.

"AN UNUSUAL RAIN."

Again!
Another day of rain!
It has rained for years.
It never clears.
The clouds come down so low
They drag and drip
Across each hill-top's tip.
In progress slow
They blow in from the sea
Eternally;
Hang heavily and black,
And then roll back;
And rain and rain and rain,
Both drifting in and drifting out again.

They come down to the ground,
These clouds, where the ground is high ;
And, lest the weather fiend forget
And leave one hidden spot unwet,
The fog comes up to the sky !
And all our pavement of planks and logs
Reeks with the rain and steeps in the fogs
Till the water rises and sinks and presses
Into your bonnets and shoes and dresses ;
And every outdoor-going dunce
Is wet in forty ways at once.

Wet ?

It's wetter than being drowned.

Dark ?

Such darkness never was found

Since the first light was made. And cold ?

O come to the land of grapes and gold,

Of fruit and flowers and sunshine gay,

When the rainy season's under way !

And they tell you calmly, evermore,

They never had such rain before !

What's that you say ? Come out ?

Why, see that sky !

Oh, what a world ! so clear ! so high !

So clean and lovely all about —

The sunlight burning through and through,

And everything just blazing blue ;

And look! the whole world blossoms again
The minute the sunshine follows the rain.
Warm sky—earth basking under—
Did it ever rain, I wonder?

FROM RUSSIAN HILL.

A strange day—bright and still;
Strange for the stillness here,
For the strong trade winds blow
With such a steady sweep it seems like rest,
Forever steadily across the crest
Of Russian Hill.

Still now, and clear—
So clear you count the houses spreading wide
In the fair cities on the farther side
Of our broad bay;
And brown Goat Island lieth large between,
Its brownness brightening into sudden green
From rains of yesterday.

Blue? Blue above of Californian sky,
Which has no peer on earth for its pure flame;
Bright blue of bay and strait spread wide below,
And, past the low dull hills that hem it so—
Blue as the sky, blue as the placid bay—
Blue mountains far away.

Thanks this year for the early rains that came
To bless us, meaning summer by and by.
This is our Spring - in - Autumn, making one
The Indian Summer tenderness of sun —
Its hazy stillness soft, and far - heard sound —
And the sweet riot of abundant spring,
The greenness flaming out from everything,
The sense of coming gladness in the ground.

From this high peace and purity look down;
Between you and the blueness lies the town.
Under those huddled roofs the heart of man
Beats warmer than this brooding day,
Spreads wider than the hill - rimmed bay,
And throbs to tenderer life, were it but seen,
Than all this new - born, all - enfolding green !

Within that heart lives still
All that one guesses, dreams, and sees —
Sitting in sunlight, warm, at ease —
From this high island — Russian Hill.

POWELL STREET.

You start
From the town's hot heart
To ride up Powell street.
Hotel and theatre and crowding shops,
And Market's cabled stream that never stops,

And the mixed hurrying beat
Of countless feet —
Take a front seat.
Before you rise
Six terraced hills, up to the low-hung skies ;
Low where across the hill they seem to lie,
And then — how high !
Up you go slowly. To the right
A wide square, green and bright.
Above that green a broad facade,
Strongly and beautifully made,
In warm clear color standeth fair and true
Against the blue.
Only, above, two purple domes rise bold,
Twin-budded spires, bright-tipped with balls of gold.
Past that, and up you glide,
Up, up, till, either side,
Wide earth and water stretch around — away —
The straits, the hills, and the low-lying, wide-spread,
dusky bay.
Great houses here,
Dull, opulent, severe.
Dives' gold birds on guarding lamps a-wing —
Dead gold, that may not sing !
Fair on the other side
Smooth, steep-laid sweeps of turf and green boughs
waving wide.
This is the hilltop's crown.
Below you, down

In blurred, dim streets, the market quarter lies,
Foul—narrow—torn with cries
Of tortured things in cages, and the smell
Of daily bloodshed rising ; that is hell.

But up here on the crown of Powell street
The air is sweet ;
And the green swaying mass of eucalyptus bends
Like hands of friends,
To gladden you despite the mansions's frown.
Then you go down.

Down, down, and round the turns to lower grades ;
Lower in all ways ; darkening with the shades
Of poverty, old youth, and unearned age,
And that quick squalor which so blots the page
Of San Francisco's beauty—swift decay
Chasing the shallow grandeur of a day.

Here, like a noble lady of lost state,
Still calmly smiling at encroaching fate,
Amidst the squalor, rises Russian Hill—
Proud—isolated—lonely—lovely still.

So on you glide.

Till the blue straits lie wide
Before you ; purple mountains loom across ;
And islands green as moss ;
With soft white fog-wreaths drifting, drifting through
To comfort you ;
And light low-singing waves that tell you reach
The end—North Beach.

THE SATIRIST.

A NEW YEAR'S REMINDER.

Better have a tender conscience for the record of
your house,
And your own share in the work which they have
done,
 Though your private conscience aches
 With your personal mistakes,
And you don't amount to very much alone,
Than to be yourself as spotless as a baby one year
old—
Your domestic habits wholly free from blame,
 While the company you stand with
 Is a thing to curse a land with,
And your public life is undiluted shame.

For the deeds men do together are what saves the
world to-day —

By our common public work we stand or fall —

And your fraction of the sin

Of the office you are in

Is the sin that's going to damn you after all!

LITTLE CELL.

Little Cell! Little Cell! with a heart as big as
heaven —

Remember that you are but a part!

This great longing in your soul

Is the longing of the whole —

And your work is not done with your heart!

Don't imagine, Little Cell,

That the work you do so well

Is the only work the world needs to do!

You are wanted in your place

For the growing of the race,

But the growing does not all depend on you!

Little Cell! Little Cell! with a race's whole am-
bition —

Remember there are others growing, too!

You've been noble—you've been strong—

Rest a while and come along—

Let the world take a turn and carry you!

THE MODEST MAID.

I am a modest San Francisco maid,
Fresh, fair, and young,
Such as the painters gladly have displayed,
The poets sung.

Modest?— Oh, modest as a bud unblown,
A thought unspoken —
Hidden and cherished, unbeheld, unknown,
In peace unbroken.

Far from the holy shades of this my home,
The coarse world raves,
And the New Woman cries to heaven's dome
For what she craves.

Loud, vulgar, public, screaming from the stage,
Her skirt divided,
Riding cross-saddled on the dying age,
Justly derided.

I blush for her, I blush for our sweet sex
By her disgraced.
My sphere is home. My soul I do not vex
With zeal misplaced.

Come then to me with happy heart, O man !
I wait your visit.
To guide your footsteps I do all I can,
Am most explicit.

As veined flower-petals teach the passing bee
The way to honey,
So printer's ink displayed instructeth thee
Where lies my money.

Go see! In type and cut across the page,
Before the nation
There you may read about my eyes, my age,
My education,

My fluffy golden hair, my tiny feet,
My pet ambition,
My well-developed figure, and my sweet
Retiring disposition.

All, all is there, and now I coyly wait.
Pray don't delay.
My address does the Blue Book plainly state,
And mamma's "day."

TECHNIQUE.

Cometh to-day the very skillful man,
Profoundly skillful in his chosen art,
All things that other men can do he can,
And do them better. He is very smart.

Sayeth, "My work is here before you all—
Come now with duly cultured mind to view it,
Here is great work, no part of it is small—
Perceive how well I do it!

"I do it to perfection. Studious years
Were spent to reach the pinnacle I've won,
Labor and thought are in my work, and tears—
Behold how well 't is done!

"See with what power this great effect is shown—
See with what ease you get the main idea;
A master in my art, I stand alone—
Now you may praise—I hear."

And I, "O master, I perceive your sway,
I note the years of study, toil, and strain
That brought the easy power you wield to-day,
The height you now attain.

"Freely your well-trained power I see you spend,
Such skill in all my life I never saw;
You have done nobly; but my able friend,
What have you done it for?

"You have no doubt achieved your dearest end,
Your work is faultless to the cultured view,
You do it well, but O my able friend—
What is it that you do?"

THE MOTHER'S CHARGE.

She raised her head. With hot and glittering eye,
"I know," she said, "that I am going to die.
Come here, my daughter, while my mind is clear—
Let me make plain to you your duty here,

My duty once—I never failed to try—
But for some reason I am going to die.”
She raised her head, and, while her eyes rolled wild,
Poured these instructions on the gasping child :

“Begin at once—don’t iron sitting down—
Wash your potatoes when the fat is brown—
Monday, unless it rains—it always pays
To get fall sewing done on the right days—
A carpet sweeper and a little broom—
Save dishes—wash the summer dining room
With soda—keep the children out of doors—
The starch is out—beeswax on all the floors—
If girls are treated like your friends they stay—
They stay, and treat you like their friends—the way
To make home happy is to keep a jar—
And save the prettiest pieces for the star
In the middle—blue’s too dark—all silk is best—
And don’t forget the corners—when they’re dressed
Put them on ice—and always wash the chest
Three times a day, the windows every week—
We need more flour—the bedroom ceilings leak—
It’s better than onion—keep the boys at home—
Gardening is good—a load, three loads of loam—
They bloom in spring—and smile, smile always,
dear—

Be brave, keep on—I hope I’ve made it clear.”

She died, as all her mothers died before.

Her daughter died in turn, and made one more.

A NEW CREATION.

What is that, mother? A head, my child,
The house of a human brain;
A windowed musical palace of thought
By whose clear light the world was brought
To all its growth and gain.

What is that, mother? 'Tis hair, my child,
Long beautiful human hair,
Whose parallel grace of curve and flow
Is cut and twisted and tortured so
You doubt it ever was there.

What is that, mother? A hat, my child,
To cover a human head;
Shelter and grace for the house of the brain—
With colors of discord and lines of pain
And ornaments from the dead.

What is that, mother? I do not know,
The milliner finds it fair;
Over head and hair and hat they grow,
Tail, tooth and claw, wing, plume, and bow,
Silk, velvet, lace, and jewel's glow,
Fur, flowers, ribbon, beads a-row,
Aigrette, rosette, and bright bandeau—
A new creation there.

CONNOISSEURS.

“No,” said the Cultured Critic, gazing haughtily
Whereon some untrained brush had wandered
naughtily,

From canons free ;

“Work such as this lacks value and perspective,
Has no real feeling—inner or reflective—

Does not appeal to me.”

Then quoth the vulgar, knowing art but meagerly,
Their unbesought opinions airing eagerly,

“Why, ain’t that flat !”

Voicing their ignorance all unconcernedly,
Saying of what the Critic scored so learnedly,

“I don’t like that !”

The Critic now vouchsafed approval sparingly
Of what some genius had attempted daringly,

“This fellow tries—

He handles his conception frankly, feelingly,
Such work as this, done strongly and appealingly,

I recognize.”

The vulgar, gazing widely and unknowingly,
Still volunteered their cheap impressions flowingly,

“Oh, come and see !”

But all that they could say of art’s reality
Was this poor voice of poorer personality,

“Now, that suits me !”

A TYPE.

I am too little, said the Wretch,
For any one to see.

Among the million men who do
This thing that I am doing too,
Why should they notice me?

My sin is common as to breathe;
It rests on every back,
And surely I am not to blame
Where everybody does the same—
Am not a bit more black!

And so he took his willing share
In a universal crime,
Thinking that no reproach could fall
On one who shared the fault of all,
Who did it all the time.

Then Genius came, and showed the world
What thing it was they did;
How their offense had reached the poles
With stench of slain unburied souls—
And all men cowered and hid.

Then Genius took that one poor Wretch—
For now the time was ripe;
Stripped him of every shield and blind,
And nailed him up for all mankind
To study—as a type!

UNMENTIONABLE.

There is a thing of which I fain would speak,
Yet shun the deed;
Lest hot disgust flush the averted cheek
Of those who read.

And yet it is common in our sight
As dust or grass;
Loathed by the lifted skirt, the tiptoe light,
Of those who pass.

We say no word, but the big placard rests
Frequent in view,
To sicken those who do not with requests
Of those who do.

"Gentlemen will not," the mild placards say.
They read with scorn.

"Gentlemen must not"—they defile the way
Of those who warn.

On boat and car the careful lady lifts
Her dress aside;
If careless—think, fair traveler, of the gifts
Of those who ride!

On every hall and sidewalk, floor and stair,
Where man's at home,
This loathsomeness is added to the care
Of those who come.

As some foul slug his trail of slime displays
On leaf and stalk,
These street-beasts make a horror in the ways
Of those who walk.

We cannot ask reform of those who do —
They can't, or won't.
We can express the scorn, intense and true,
Of those who don't.

NEW YEAR'S DAY.

RONDEAU.

On New Year's Day he plans a cruise
To Heaven straight—no time to lose!
Vowing to live so virtuously
That each besetting sin shall flee—
Good resolutions wide he strews
On New Year's Day.

A while he minds his p's and q's,
And all temptations doth refuse,
Recalling his resolves so free
On New Year's Day.

But in the long year that ensues,
They fade away by threes and twos—
The place we do not wish to see
Is paved with all he meant to be,
When he next year his life reviews—
On New Year's Day.

NEWS.

Crieth the empty public, greedily,

“I want the news!”

And they who write and publish, needily,
Come running to his cry, and fill him speedily
With what they choose.

With all that they can steal or beg or borrow
Of crimes and shames,
Serving prodigious tales of sin and sorrow
That happened yesterday and will to-morrow,
With different names.

The newest murder heads the blackened pages
With spreading stains.
News? Is it news to know the lion rages?
Your newest murder smells of oldest ages,
As old as Cain's.

News of a man's defencelessness--temptation--
(Which all believe)--
News of a woman's sudden education
In good and evil's fine discrimination--
As old as Eve!

We want real news—not tales of dying, wooing,
And such old lore—
We want to hear of big events now brewing,
We want to know the things the world is doing,
Not done before.

The public would be pleased with less of daring,
 If it could choose;
With less of private life hung out for airing—
Mere nursery tales in which we all are sharing—
 And more real news.

News! World-old tales of man's first freaks and
 poses,

 Primal mistakes.

They cannot see the news before their noses—
Only these fresh, the crowded sheet discloses—
 Some bran-new fakes!

THE PASTELLETTE.

The pastelle is too strong, said he.

 Lo! I will make it fainter yet!
And he wrought with tepid ecstasy
 A pastellette.

A touch—a word—a tone half caught—
 He softly felt and handled them;
Flavor of feeling—scent of thought—
 Shimmer of gem—

That we may read, and feel as he
 What vague, pale pleasure we can get
From this mild, witless mystery—
 The pastellette.

WORK AND WAGES.

John Burns receives in weekly pay
Five pounds as wages, clear ;
But a London banker, wise and great,
Says John is worth to the English state
Three million pounds a year.

He gives three million pounds in work,
Gets fifty-two times five ;
It does not seem exactly straight
That he who serves so well the state
Should just be kept alive.

John Rockefeller corners oil,
To make thereby a living ;
And, by an odd coincidence,
He makes—an income most immense—
Just what John Burns is giving.

He gives—the skill to corner oil !
Gets fifteen million yearly ;
(Dollars for pounds the sum's the same,)
But how in all creation's name,
Does it come to match so queerly ?

The rich man makes his yearly claim,
John Burns' labor meets it ;
But why should one man feed the earth,
Enriching it by all he's worth,
If Rockefeller eats it ?

And why should Rockefeller have,
For handing round the oil,
For his own self in private wealth
Fruit of the teeming strength and health
Of such unstinted toil?

John Burns is rich and feeds the world,
The world will soon forget him;
John Rockefeller, poor and lean,
Licks all our fullest platters clean —
It's funny that we let him!

STEP FASTER, PLEASE.

Of all most aggravating things,
If you are hot in haste,
Is to have a man in front of you
With half a day to waste.

There is this one thing that justifies
The man in the foremost place —
The fact that he is the man in front,
The leader of the race.

But, for Heaven's sake, if you are ahead,
Don't dawdle at your ease!
You set the pace for the man behind;
Step faster, please!

OUR SAN FRANCISCO CLIMATE.

Said I to my friend from the East —
A tenderfoot he —
As I showed him the greatest and least
Of our hills by the sea —
“How do you like our climate?”
And I smiled in my glee.

I showed him the blue of the hills,
And the blue of the sky,
And the blue of the beautiful bay
Where the ferry-boats ply —
And “How do you like our climate?”
Securely asked I.

Then the wind blew over the sand,
And the fog came down,
And the papers and dust were on hand
All over the town —
“How do you like our climate?”
I cried with a frown.

On the corner we stood as we met
Awaiting a car;
Beneath us a vent-hole was set,
As our street corners are —
And street corners in our San Francisco
Are perceptible far.

He meant to have answered, of course,
I could see that he tried ;
But he had not the strength of a horse,
And before he replied
The climate rose up from that corner in force,
And he died !

CHRISTMAS TIME.

'Tis Christmas time, my little son,
The birthday of the Lord,
Who said he came to bring on earth
Not peace, dear, but a sword.

"Peace and good will," the angels sing
On the birthday of the Lord ;
But Christ declared he came to bring
Not peace, dear, but a sword.

He said he came to set the son
At variance with his sire,
And that a man's foes should be found
Around his household fire.

So it is right that we should see,
On the birthday of the Lord,
In a million hearts a million hates,
In a million hands a sword.

No wonder that our homes are rent,
That brother hateth brother,

No wonder that our lives are spent
In ruining each other.

No wonder that the most of men
Still hunt and fight for food—
The wonder is that any one
Is ever half so good.

But this is Christmas time, my son,
Go get your broken toys,
And give to the ungrateful hands
Of poorer girls and boys.

Rejoice in your big Christmas tree,
My happy little lad,
And wonder not that most of us
Are hungry, sour, and sad.

What's that you say, my little son?
Christ came to teach us love—
Love all the time, for every one,
And the great joy thereof?

I grant you that it reads that way,
But who are you to stand
Against the wisdom of the day
In every Christian land?

Here are the facts, my little son—
And facts are stubborn things;
Judge if the state of man to-day
Is what the angel sings.

IN RE "ANDROMANIACS."

Parkhurst says that woman is superior,
Man, her son, confessedly inferior;
That Scripture proves her excellence interior—
 "God's favorite sex" is she;
Pray forgive the scientific querier
 Who asks how that can be.

He says 'tis not in the body or the mind of her,
But an element constituent in all that you can find
 of her,
Not to see it is obdurate and blind of her,
 Stupid as can be;
She is queen because of it—truly, more than kind
 of her!

 Queen of man is she.

She is best, because of femininity.
Man, poor wretch, has only masculinity.
Here stands forth this servant of the Trinity
 To show which God prefers—
The crowns and palms and prizes of infinity
 Undoubtedly are hers.

Still poor man may rule the world and fight in it,
Teach and preach and hold his little light in it,
Toil and plan that living may be bright in it,
 All for the sake of love;
She has only to keep from any right in it,
 To hold her place above.

THE SAN FRANCISCO HEN.

The San Francisco house-mama
A happy dame is she,
When feeding to her gathered young
The fragrant fricasee,
The amber broth for invalids,
Rich broilers for the men,
With boiled, and roast,
And hash on toast,
Of the San Francisco hen.

But walk the wholesale market streets,
Ye housewives kind and wise,
And on the poultry set for sale
Fix your discerning eyes;
In crowded cages huddled down,
Unwatered and unfed,
In fear and pain,
In sun and rain,
They scream till they are dead.

They live in filth and agony,
They die in shrieking fear—
Come down, ye guardians of the home,
And see and smell and hear!
Let not your hearts be troubled
By the tortures you behold,

But judge if meat
Is good to eat
Defiled before it's sold.

The meekest housewife may assume
An interest in the health
Of those about her board who earn—
Who are the country's wealth;
And meat like this means vile disease
Among the sons of men—
Not to dilate
On the ghastly fate
Of the San Francisco hen.

"EN BANC."

(CALIFORNIA.)

Associate Justices of Court Supreme!
Stern arbiters of destiny in law!
Thy gathered dignity and power would seem
August a thing as people ever saw.

Associate Justices of Court Supreme!
Sitting *en banc* to punish for contempt;
To see you sitting, who would ever dream
That you from such opinion were exempt?

A crowded room with vulgar men who spit—

Spit on the crimson carpet without shame.

This before Justice—in the sight of it—

The highest thing for which we have a name!

Then “Hear ye! Hear ye! Hear ye!” is the cry,

We rise, they shamle in, the court room stares,

While these great Justices *en banc* go by

And take possession of their rocking-chairs.

Their rocking-chairs. Their cane-backed rocking-chairs!

Wherein they swing and dandle to and fro,

Lounging and stretching has lazy airs

As smoking-rooms and billiard parlors know.

Grave issues hang on every spoken word,

The people listen, whispering in pairs,

The case proceeds, and through it all is heard

The steady squeaking of their rocking-chairs.

How can we honor Justice when 'tis seen

In men who shame her temple (or her tomb),

Who can insult the Goddess with a mien

That would debar them from a drawing-room?

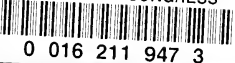
No reverence is too deep from those who claim

The highest ground that mortal soul has trod;

Those who serve Justice, standing in her name,

Serve in the presence of the living God.

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



0 016 211 947 3